

AN ANALYSIS OF UNIT COHESION IN  
THE 44TH GEORGIA INFANTRY

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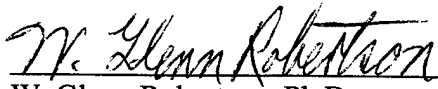
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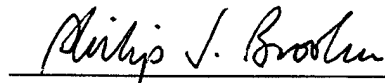
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## ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF UNIT COHESION IN THE 44TH GEORGIA INFANTRY by MAJ Scott T. Glass, 321 pages.

The Army of Northern Virginia built its foundation on bedrock regiments like the 44th Georgia Infantry. It is the collective battlefield performance by regiments such as these that gave the Army of Northern Virginia a reputation that few armies ever attain.

This thesis analyzes the cohesive factors of training, economic background, religion, family ties, and leadership in the 44th Georgia. The regiment needed all of these factors to hold together through a series of battlefield victories and disasters. Material concerning the 44th Georgia comes from family histories, soldier diaries and letters, reminiscences, census records, and the soldier's individual compiled service records.

The conclusion is that the 44th Georgia continued to be an effective fighting force on par with other Army of Northern Virginia regiments until the very end of the war. It could do this despite horrible losses because the cohesive factors at work always kept the regimental remnant together and fighting.



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Rick and Mariel Joslyn of Sparta, Georgia, have shared an intense interest in the 44th Georgia with me ever since I met them in 1989. They have been a constant source of anecdotes, files, and facts on the 44th Georgia and its men.

My wife Paige and my sons Michael and Matthew have been very patient with me spending time away from them on this project. They understood what this thesis meant to me and kept me from feeling guilty accomplishing it. It became "Daddy's Book."

Lastly, I must mention the sacrifices of my three great-great grandfathers in the 44th Georgia. James C. Atkinson, Issac M. Jackson, and James S. O'Neal left loving families for the uncertainty of battle. James Atkinson died two weeks before the end of the war and lies buried in Richmond, Virginia. Issac Jackson died an early death in 1880, a death no doubt hastened by the horrors he endured. "Pete" O'Neal lived until 1917 and constantly spoke to his children and grandchildren the carnage he witnessed. The veterans of the 44th Georgia always remembered their service, which is exactly why we should never forget.

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## PART I: 1862--UNCERTAIN WARRIORS

### CHAPTER 1

#### ANSWERING THE CALL TO ARMS

##### Forming the Forty-Fourth Georgia Volunteer Infantry

In January 1862, America's Civil War reached its tenth month of hostilities. The State of Georgia vigorously supported the Confederate government of President Jefferson Davis with military manpower in the first year of the war. By the time of the first major battle of the war at 1st Manassas in July 1861, Georgia had recruited, armed, and equipped over 17,000 troops for service primarily outside the state.<sup>1</sup> By the end of 1861, Georgia raised thirty-three regiments and five separate battalions of infantry, one regiment and two battalions of cavalry, and seven artillery batteries. Two regimental-sized legions with infantry, cavalry, and artillery components also entered Confederate service from Georgia before the fall of 1861.<sup>2</sup>

With the exception of a couple of regiments and miscellaneous small units, this force of approximately 35,000 men served the Confederate war effort in 1861 outside Georgia's borders. However, this would not be enough. The central government in Richmond, Virginia, recognized the need for more regiments and units of all arms in the coming year. President Davis had good reason to be alarmed. Federal forays against river lines of communications and seaports along the Atlantic coastline threatened commerce with Europe. He saw as particularly vulnerable the large number of vital

railroads running through land adjacent to the coast. Federal amphibious operations could be expected to increase against them in early 1862.

Northwest of Richmond in the agricultural breadbasket of the Shenandoah Valley, Federal forces operated in increasing numbers. The final and most serious threat to the Confederacy came from the thousands of Federal troops training around Washington, D.C., just 100 miles north of Richmond. They could have but one goal in mind and that was to capture the Confederate capital.

Davis knew that whatever manpower he had at his disposal, it would not be enough for the campaigns in the coming summer months. He called on his governors in the Confederacy for more units. To Georgia Governor Joseph E. Brown he sent a request to raise twelve additional regiments for Confederate service.<sup>3</sup> Brown agreed to raise at least that number and possibly more, despite a very strong desire on his part to maintain a ready force of 10,000 constantly inside the state specifically for Georgia's defense needs.<sup>4</sup> Empowered by state legislation enacted in 1860, he issued a proclamation to the citizens of the state on February 11, 1862, notifying them of Georgia's commitment to organize more forces for Confederate service. Brown announced that he intended to conscript troops if sufficient men did not volunteer.<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, the Adjutant General of Georgia General Henry C. Wayne issued General Order No. 2 that newspapers across the state printed two days after the Governor's proclamation for the widest possible dissemination. Wayne's General Order No. 2, among other details, contained eight main points.

1. It directed militia officials to call musters on the following March 4 to enroll citizens and aliens in the militia. Enrollees could volunteer for Confederate service with a Georgia unit.

2. The order required every white, able-bodied male between the ages of eighteen and forth-five not already serving to present themselves for enrollment in the militia unless already exempted by law.

3. It authorized militia officials to organize companies and hold elections for company officers if between 78 and 114 men volunteered for Confederate service.

4. The order described conditions under which the senior militia official could hold a draft to meet a district or county goal required by the state.

5. It announced that the term of volunteer service would be three years or the duration of the war.

6. The order set the volunteer enlistment bounty at \$50 per private. Predictably, drafted men received no bounty.

7. It selected three camps of instruction near Marietta, Griffin, and Guyton, and specified which militia districts would send recruits to each camp.

8. The order required officials to arrange for surgeons or doctors to conduct a physical examination of each recruit volunteer.<sup>6</sup>

Governor Brown's proclamation and General Wayne's General Order No. 2 set in motion a process that would produce almost thirty additional regiments of infantry by late spring of 1862. These two documents also led directly to the formation of the 44th Georgia Infantry. Early in the war, the name often appeared as the "44th Georgia

Volunteer Infantry,” but later omitted the “Volunteer” in common usage. Many men serving in the regiment did, in fact, voluntarily enlist at the militia musters. But, given the tone of the Georgia Governor and his Adjutant General, it is perhaps just as well the common title of the regiment dropped the word “Volunteer.”

The 44th Georgia Infantry would be composed of ten companies from ten counties through the middle part of Georgia north and north east of Macon. Each formed from mustered men in their respective county seats and then traveled to Camp Stephens, near Griffin, for initial training and forming regiments. The companies selected nicknames before they left to honor a sponsor or their home county.

#### The “Weems Guards”

On Tuesday, March 4, following Governor Brown’s proclamation, at least ninety-five men volunteered for three years or the duration of the war at Bear Creek Station, now Hampton, in southwestern Henry County. At least one partial and three full companies of infantry enlisted during 1861 and this company would be the fifth to enlist out of Henry County. A significant number of volunteers came from sons of local planters in the militia districts of Mount Carmel, McDonough, and Bear Creek under jurisdiction of the 85th Regiment, Georgia Militia. At least sixty of the volunteers filled positions on the 85th Regiment roll prior to the war.<sup>7</sup> That same day, the newly inducted men elected local physician William H. Peebles as Captain. Peebles, twenty-four years-old at the time of the muster, practiced medicine by trade. House carpenter Augustus D. McKenzie, thirty-one, won election as First Lieutenant. Farmers Henry M. Credille, twenty-seven,



and Samuel J. Wilkins, twenty-six, won election as second lieutenants.<sup>8</sup> Credille raised a family on his farm.

After electing leaders, the men set about what seemed to the next most serious order of business of selecting a proper nickname. The Weems family counted three wealthy, influential planters in Henry County. The three men claimed five sons and many close relatives in the ranks. Captain Peebles also married a Weems girl, the daughter of Samuel Weems. Choosing "Weems Guards" suited many for a company nickname.<sup>9</sup> By March 10, a few more men had joined, bringing unit strength to just over a hundred. Over fifty more men also volunteered for service in the county in the interim, but the company could not absorb all of them without exceeding the limit for company strength set at 114.<sup>10</sup>

In due course these 50 or so men formed part of another company associated with the 44th Georgia Infantry. Captain Peebles assembled his men at Bear Creek Station on March 10 for physical examinations required by the Adjutant General's directive. Peebles probably accomplished this task with the assistance of Dr. Jesse Turnipseed, another Henry County physician who enlisted as a private. It is worth noting that no one is recorded as failing this examination.<sup>11</sup>

#### The "Jasper Volunteers"

Two full infantry companies and part of a third enlisted from Jasper County in 1861. John C. Key, a well-respected lawyer from Jasper County, played a prominent role in organizing the third full company, called "Jasper Volunteers." Ninety-two men

enlisted the first week of March in the county seat of Monticello. The men elected the thirty-six-year-old Key their captain. To assist him, the men elected James M. Henderson, about thirty-three years of age and a successful farmer worth about \$10,000 in the 1860 census, as First Lieutenant. They elected Aris Newton, twenty-nine, and Stephen Harrison Johnston, about thirty-five, as Second Lieutenants. Both farmed for a living and Johnston could claim a net worth nearly equal to Henderson's in 1860. Newton carried about half the worth of Johnston in 1860, but came from a family that reported a net worth of over \$31,000 that year.<sup>12</sup>

Early during the Civil War, Jasper County established a support group called the "Relief Committee for the Soldiers' Wives and Children." Key intended to make good use of the committee's talents and resources.<sup>13</sup> Besides sending packages to serving troops from Jasper, the Committee furnished each company leaving the county with tents and camp equipment. On arrival at Camp Stephens, Captain Key learned that the Confederate government issued tents to each reporting company. The enterprising Key declined issue of the government tents and applied for a commutation payment instead. He placed the tents' value at \$155.<sup>14</sup> Although it would take the central government fully six months to process the claim, it did eventually win approval in the amount Key requested. The resulting \$155 found its way back to the Committee's treasury for the benefit of indigent soldiers' families. By that time, many 44th Georgia families would be in desperate need of financial assistance due to the death or disablement of their soldier provider.<sup>15</sup>

### The "Johnson Guards"

Clarke County boasted several cotton mills, light industry, and the two growing towns of Watkinsville and Athens. But besides a handful of millworkers and a few towners, the company drew almost exclusively on small farmers and planter's sons from the southern agricultural districts of Clarke fed by the Oconee River and its various branches.<sup>16</sup> The militia muster called for March 4 met in Watkinsville. Ninety-two men initially volunteered for active service, and a rousing speech by Clarke County Superior Court Clerk John Calvin Johnson upped the number to 104.<sup>17</sup> From this total, an infantry company formed and elected prominent Watkinsville physician, thirty-year old Samuel P. Lumpkin, as their Captain. Farmer James S. Griffith, thirty-three, won election as First Lieutenant. William B. Haygood, Sr., thirty-eight, and Athens merchant John W. Reeves, twenty-eight, topped the voting for Second Lieutenants. Haygood came from a socially prominent middle Georgia family that had helped found Emory College in Oxford.

The name "Johnson Guards" chosen for the company surprised no one. It honored John Calvin Johnson, probably on the strength of his influence, reputation, and patriotic oratory,<sup>18</sup> but perhaps another factor contributed as well. In the 1860 Census, Captain Lumpkin is shown as a boarder living in Johnson's household.<sup>19</sup> Lumpkin probably used his position as Captain to honor his landlord, mentor, and friend with the company's nickname. Saturday night, March 8, the men spent in Athens saying farewells and making final purchases of things they thought they might need in their new occupation of soldiering.

The next day, the company soldiers attended a service preached especially for them at the Methodist Church. After one last night in Clarke County the unit departed on Monday for Camp Stephens by rail.<sup>20</sup> The men laid over in Atlanta twenty-four hours in the course of the trip to Griffin, arriving early on Wednesday morning, March 12th. Captain Lumpkin marched his charges to camp and busied them in erecting tents. This task they completed with floors, ditching, and other camp comforts before nightfall.<sup>21</sup>

#### The "Estes Guards"

Educator and family man John B. Estes, thirty-two, captained the Clayton County outfit nicknamed the "Estes Guards." It implies a strong connection to the Estes family in sponsorship or influence or both. In fact, another Estes soldier served in the company briefly before winning appointment as the 44th Georgia Sergeant Major. At the March 4 muster in the county seat of Jonesboro, the 104 volunteers elected town merchant R. R. Hanes, thirty, as First Lieutenant and James H. Stewart, Quintus C. Grice, and Thomas S. Tatum as Second Lieutenants. Hanes fathered three children by 1860 on his prosperous farm. Stewart came in easily the youngest of the second lieutenants at twenty-two, with Tatum at twenty-seven and Grice at thirty-one. Stewart farmed for a living, and the other two probably did as well to support their wives and children.<sup>22</sup>

#### The "Freeman Rangers" or "Freeman Volunteers"

Nickname origin for this company is not expressly clear. The two nicknames associated with the company are "Freeman Rangers" and "Freeman Volunteers," and both appear about equally. Two Freeman males served in the company, although not as

prominent officers. The 1860 Census lists six family households named Freeman for Spalding County. It is plausible that the families could have sponsored the company in some fashion and received the honor of the nickname. Spalding County fully supported the Confederate cause with manpower in 1861. The county contributed at least four full infantry companies in that first year of the Civil War when Spalding men formed parts of four other companies as well.

Well-to-do farmer Joseph Warren Adams, about twenty-nine, won election in Griffin at Spalding County's March 4th militia muster as captain of the 104 volunteers. Adams also came from a socially and politically prominent middle Georgia family. His family operated large farms and owned milling interests, and his wife came from another prosperous family. He counted several relatives by blood and marriage in his own company.<sup>23</sup> To assist Adams, the Spalding men elected James H. Connally, Samuel A. Scott, and Elijah L. Manley as lieutenants. First Lieutenant Connally, twenty-five, listed his occupation as "physician," a livelihood that probably brought a fair amount of exposure in Spalding County. It probably earned him the task, as with Captain Peebles at Bear Creek Station, of conducting some or all of the Spalding volunteers' physical examinations. Second Lieutenant Scott, twenty-four, represented six men with that last name in this company from Spalding County.<sup>24</sup>

#### The "Putnam Volunteers"

The militia assembled on March 4th in the county seat of Eatonton and eighty-five men initially volunteered to serve in the fifth company raised in the county. Forty-five

year old Baptist minister David L. Hitchcock received the most votes for the post of Captain.<sup>25</sup> The men chose "Putnam Volunteers" for a nickname and elected as lieutenants Charles Drew Pearson, Reuben N. Edwards, and George G. Greene. First Lieutenant Pearson, thirty-seven, and Second Lieutenant Greene, thirty-two, each put aside his Eatonton mercantile business and family with at least two minor children to volunteer.<sup>26</sup>

On March 12, Captain Hitchcock assembled the "Putnam Volunteers" in the evening in a shady grove of trees fronting the Female Academy in Eatonton. Local pastor Reverend Wynne presented the company with a flag sewn by the ladies of the town. Private Zachariah J. Edmondson accepted the colors with the appropriately solemn ceremonial response and in turn committed them to the care of color-bearer Green J. Spivey. At four o'clock the next morning the "Putnam Volunteers" boarded a special train to take them to Griffin.<sup>27</sup>

#### The "Huie Guards"

Fayette County men provided the rank and file for the "Huie Guards." On March 4th men enrolled in the militia met in Griffin to organize a company and elect officers. The men selected John Huie (pronounced HUGH-e) as captain and selected "Huie Guards" as a nickname. Captain Huie at the time of the muster was around fifty-two years old, easily the oldest of the ten original captains by about twenty years. The well-known and respected Huie ran a large farming operation to support his family and two of his sons would eventually serve in the company beside him. First Lieutenant Robert Matthews, thirty-one, and Second Lieutenants John L. Blalock, twenty-six, and Thomas

J. Edmondson, twenty-three, rounded out the complement of elected officers. Matthews was a typical small farmer with a wife and two children to support, but Blalock and Edmondson both came from prosperous slaveowning families.<sup>28</sup> Of all the companies at Camp Stephens, this group would feel the pinch of homesickness least. Family members and friends visited the men in camp frequently. Often, large groups of local citizens observed the companies drilling on cleared land inside the camp confines.<sup>29</sup>

### The "Pike Volunteers"

Horse trader and farmer Richard O. "Dick" Banks organized another volunteer company at a militia muster conducted at Zebulon in Pike County. Banks' influence and popularity as an ardent Whig served him well as he won the post of the "Pike County Volunteers" first Captain.<sup>30</sup> The volunteers selected twenty-seven-year-old county Clerk of Superior Court John C. Redding, farmer John W. Butler, twenty-nine, and farm laborer Matthew R. Beckham, about thirty-two, as the first set of lieutenants. Redding's vocation earned him much exposure in Pike County because the post required running for office and its business directly affected many transactions in the county. Butler owned thirteen slaves before the war and operated a large farming interest. Beckham's occupation as "farm laborer" in the 1860 census might be misleading since it may imply a hired worker at the bottom end of the economic scale. However, he worked on his father's farm that reported a net worth of over \$29,000 in the same census. The company held elections on March 4 and departed for Camp Stephens shortly after with about 114 men.<sup>31</sup>

### The "Morgan and Henry Volunteers"

Morgan County's 29th Militia Regiment called a March 4 muster at the Madison regimental parade ground. The number of volunteers totaled barely half that required to form an infantry company, but satisfied the governmental levy on Morgan manpower. The squad of fifty-two men left their homes and Morgan County on Sunday, March 9th. They rode the rails on a special military pass to Griffin and Camp Stephens, arriving there at 10 o'clock the next day.<sup>32</sup> Cotton merchant and former militia lieutenant John H. Harris had been appointed by the squad as its leader. Charles W. Alliston, also a former militia lieutenant, assumed deputy commander duties. On arrival at Camp Stephens, Harris immediately set about drawing government tents and cooking utensils. Camp authorities assigned a spot for the company street, and the men put up camp.<sup>33</sup>

Around fifty Henry County men unable to join the "Weems Guards" on March 4 because of the large number of men volunteering, organized a squad under twenty-seven-year-old house carpenter Levi J. Smith and Jeremiah A. McMullen, twentynine, the same day. They traveled to Camp Stephens knowing they would probably unite with men from another county to form a company. This practice appeared throughout the war on the Southern side when one county could not completely man an organization. Indeed, ten of these composite companies had already entered service in the first year of the Civil War from the 44th Georgia Infantry source counties. The Henry squad arrived March 14. Although largely unfamiliar with each other, the two county outfits combined to form one company. This arrangement would pose no serious problems for Company I. In fact, during company elections that morning, the men agreed to divide leadership positions as



equitably as possible among the two counties. Two officers represented each county. For non-commissioned officers, Morgan County provided four and Henry County furnished five.<sup>34</sup>

Alliston and Harris exchanged roles after the leader elections. Alliston, a twenty-seven-year-old farmer worth \$3,500 in the Federal Census taken in 1860, won the post of Captain. Harris, who led the Morgan squad to Griffin, was elected First Lieutenant on this, his thirty-fifth birthday. He had been a prosperous merchant in Madison before the war.<sup>35</sup> The Henry men reaffirmed their faith in leaders Levi Smith and Jeremiah McMullen by electing them as Second Lieutenants.

#### The "Greene County Volunteers"

Minister and teacher James W. Beck continued the trend of most elected regimental leaders being learned, landed, or both. Beck emerged as the elected captain at the head of eighty-seven Greene County men who met on March 4 in Greensboro to enlist for three years or the duration of the war. As with other companies, a considerable number of volunteers had served or been carried on the roles of the organized militia, in this case the 17th Regiment.<sup>36</sup> Beck himself served as a 3rd Sergeant with Company B, 2nd Georgia Infantry Regiment during the previous year.<sup>37</sup> His military service made him all the more desirable to the men as a company leader. William A. Rowland, a twenty-nine-year-old doctor, won the post of First Lieutenant. John D. Gentry, thirty-three, filled one of the second lieutenant posts. Before the war, he taught school to support his wife and four children. Thomas T. Eason filled the position of another lieutenant.<sup>38</sup>

Greene County raised three infantry companies in the first year of the war. County officials floated bond initiatives to assist with supplying companies before departure. The bonds issued by the county came in sums between \$100 and \$500 each. Residents could support the company by purchasing one bond or a series of them. Evidence suggests Beck's company received \$5,000 to pay for camp equipage as did the three companies that departed the county in 1861.<sup>39</sup>

### Regimental Elections and Organization

With ten companies available, Confederate authorities organized the 44th Georgia Volunteer Infantry on Saturday, March 15, 1862. Regimental elections took place before the formal induction ceremony, most likely on Saturday morning, for the regimental Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, and Major positions. Much electioneering went on in camp during the days preceding the elections, leading a soldier from Clarke County to complain of too many visitors to Captain Lumpkin merely dropping by and campaigning for votes.<sup>40</sup>

For Colonel, Captain Robert A. Smith of the 2nd Georgia Infantry Battalion competed against Joseph W. Adams, Captain of the Spalding County company. The election for Lieutenant Colonel pitted Greene County's Captain Beck against Clayton County's Captain Estes. Captain Banks of Pike County ran against Captain Hitchcock from Putnam County for the post of Major.<sup>41</sup> Robert A. Smith of Bibb County would be the 44th Georgia Infantry's first Colonel. While it is true that much politicking preceded the elections, Smith did none of this in person at Camp Stephens. At election time he

could be found in Norfolk, Virginia, on active duty as Captain of Company B, 2nd Georgia Infantry Battalion, a post he had held for 11 months.<sup>42</sup>

His nearly a year of active service satisfied many men, but obviously Smith had strong support from state authorities for the colonel's position. An announcement appeared in the *Macon Telegraph* newspaper on the same day that the counties held their militia musters advertised the fact that Smith had been authorized by Governor Brown to raise a regiment. This suggests that Smith would have been appointed as a colonel at the head of any one of several regiments being raised in the state and electing him might have been a mere formality.<sup>43</sup> Smith, thirty-seven, had not been born in any of the regimental source counties and was not a resident of any of them, either. He practiced law and raised a family in Macon before the war and probably met some of the company leaders during his travels to engage in his profession. Some others in the regiment probably knew him by reputation, but he could not claim to be widely known among the regiment's rank and file soldiers volunteering at the county militia musters. He would be unable to join his new command until he resigned his current post in late March at the earliest.<sup>44</sup>

Estes won the regiment's lieutenant colonelcy in a close race between him and Beck. Captain Banks was selected major and his opponent did not express satisfaction with the outcome. Captain Hitchcock complained in a letter to his local newspaper that he would have won the post of major had it not been for some "cunningly devised schemes."<sup>45</sup> In the companies from Clayton and Pike Counties, the advancement of Estes and Banks required elections for an officer to fill the vacancy. Both companies advanced their officer corps individually one grade and elected a new second lieutenant. The

Clayton company elected S. D. Mann, a typical small farmer of modest means with a family including two children. The lieutenant elected in the Pike unit, Thomas Kendrick, was forty-three with at least ten children, one of whom enlisted with him. Kendrick owned slaves to work a large farm worth \$20,000 before the war.<sup>46</sup>

Officers temporarily appointed as Regimental Quartermaster and Adjutant would have to wait for confirmation until approval of Colonel Smith's formal commissioning as colonel and he physically joined the regiment.<sup>47</sup> Private John T. Hewell, twenty-eight, of Company G received a Captain's appointment as Quartermaster. Captain Beck temporarily served as regimental adjutant.

Colonel Smith later confirmed Hewell's appointment. He also appointed Charles M. Wiley as Adjutant effective April 1st. Wiley served as 3rd Sergeant in Smith's Company B, 2nd Georgia Battalion at Norfolk. More than likely, Colonel Smith made this appointment more out of familiarity, liking, and trust in Wiley than a dislike for Captain Beck. Like Smith, Wiley had not been present at the regiment's organization and swearing-in ceremony.<sup>48</sup>

Other appointments included Gabriel Harrison as Surgeon and Nathaniel S. Walker as Assistant Surgeon. Harrison, forty-eight, conducted a medical practice in Bibb County and certainly knew Colonel Smith before the war when Smith practiced law in Macon. It is open to question if Colonel Smith secured the appointment for Harrison, but it should not be discounted. Walker, thirty-one, served as one of Putnam's county doctors before the war. Smith appointed Private Fleming Jordan out of the "Jasper Volunteers" as Regimental Commissary. Baptist Minister Thomas J. Beck, fifty-five,

signed on as the 44th Georgia's Chaplain. Beck had long preached to congregations throughout middle Georgia. Although records are not clear, he was either the brother or uncle of Captain Beck.<sup>49</sup> Private A. J. Barron of the Putnam company won appointment as the inaugural Sergeant Major of the 44th Georgia. Barron, twenty-nine, and Colonel Smith both counted the county seat of Clinton in Jones County as their birthplace and both grew up there. Colonel Smith and Barron undoubtedly knew each other and the other's family fairly well.<sup>50</sup>

The next Monday, March 17, saw the 44th Georgia Volunteer Infantry embark on over three years of Confederate service with a formal induction ceremony. Under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Estes, the regimental companies formed a line of battle two ranks deep in an open drill field at Camp Stephens. The line extended about a quarter of a mile, impressing many of the soldiers. Captains of each company delivered to the enrolling officer a previously prepared muster roll. A Captain Dillard of Griffin served as enrolling officer and called the regimental roll. Men in the ranks answered "Present!" when called. Company commanders accounted for each absentee.<sup>51</sup> When the 44th Georgia officially began its military career that sunny Monday afternoon, it did so with 918 men present and accepted for service.<sup>52</sup> At the conclusion of the roll, Captain Dillard administered the oath inducting the regiment as a whole. After that came the reading of an article of war dealing with desertion.<sup>53</sup> When the men broke ranks after the ceremony, it was as a regiment and not as a group of separate companies.

After mustering in, the enlisted men deserved payment of a \$50 bounty. A Confederate government representative paid the bounty money the very next day in

Confederate money or bonds the men already dubiously referred to as “shinplasters.”<sup>54</sup>

All received the cash bounty except one man, Private William “Uncle Billy” Sanders from Greene County, who refused his. Sanders earned a living before the war as a minister and was over sixty years old at the time he enlisted. It is not recorded why he refused his bounty.<sup>55</sup> One more detail remained to formalize acceptance into Confederate service. Shortly after signing for the bounty money, each man received a uniform coat, uniform pants, and a kepi cap. The government at this point expected them to provide their own socks, underclothing, and shirts.<sup>56</sup> Some men chose not to wear the government provided uniforms and kept wearing their locally made militia uniforms.

The men at this time ate well, did little except for erecting tents and drilling, and put bounty money in their pockets. One soldier in Company I felt prompted to write in this diary that the troops in the regiment were “all well pleased with the war so far.”<sup>57</sup> This would soon change as training began in earnest. In the couple of weeks following the formal induction ceremony, the volunteer companies received their company designations within the 44th Georgia Infantry. This was more than just an administrative detail since a company’s letter designation in many cases determined places in the regimental battle line, march order, and maneuver formations. The company letter designations were: Company--“Weems Guards,” Company B--“Jasper Volunteers,” Company C--“Johnson Guards,” Company D--“Estes Guards,” Company E--“Freeman Rangers/Volunteers,” Company F--“Putnam Volunteers,” Company G--“Huie Guards,” Company H--“Pike Volunteers,” Company I--“Morgan and Henry Volunteers,” and Company K--“Greene County Volunteers.”<sup>58</sup>

### Camp Stephens and Camp McIntosh

Selected as one of three major training and induction centers for the State of Georgia, Camp Stephens honored Georgian and Confederate Vice-President Alexander H. Stephens. The infantry camp began hosting musters and training for Georgia infantry units since at least July 1861, and most likely served as a militia training ground in some capacity well before the war. A companion cavalry camp of instruction also called Griffin home.<sup>59</sup> Camp Stephens' location in Griffin most likely occurred because of available cleared land and water, a central spot in the state, and easy access to railroad connections.

The camp occupied wooded and cleared land about two miles north of the city center of Griffin. The main part of the camp lay a half mile east of the Macon and Western Railroad linking Atlanta and Macon, Georgia. Layout measured 1,000 yards long with clearings being mainly old farming fields. A main road ran from the entrance west to east, and company streets branched off from the main road to the north and south. The 44th Georgia company areas occupied the extreme eastern end in the camp's Third Division.<sup>60</sup>

It seems that in this stage of the war, soldiers training at Camp Stephens fared well in the way of comforts. Units could bring tentage from home if desired, but most drew government-issued ones. Soldiers from the Clarke County company initially erected government supplied tents, but found the arrangement unsatisfactory. The tents measured six-by-eight feet and nineteen housed the whole company, plus two long wall tents with flaps that sheltered Captain Lumpkin and the other officers. These twenty-one

tents did not provide the level of space and comfort the Clarke men desired. Captain Lumpkin agreed to send to Clarke County for the militia tents familiar to the men from militia drills prior to the war. These arrived by train Tuesday, March 18. The men attacked their “chicken coops” with vigor and enthusiasm. They cleared more space called for by the militia tents’ longer lengths, dug new ditching, and put in new flooring. Private Asbury S. “Hull” Jackson described his accommodations as “outside they look more like houses. Inside, at night, more like plastered parlors.” His and others’ pride in their new quarters led them to paint their names on the outside.<sup>61</sup>

At Camp Stephens, obvious attention had been expended on water and washing facilities. This was an absolute necessity as the camp population numbered at least 3,500 to 4,000 men while the 44th Georgia and sister units 45th Georgia Infantry, 46th Georgia Infantry, and 10th Georgia Infantry Battalion drilled there.<sup>62</sup> Down a slope 150 yards north from the regiment’s company areas a clear spring flowed two feet wide by twelve feet long with a depth of one and one-half feet. Slightly downstream a wooden box constructed of about the same dimensions allowed soldiers to wash clothes and cooking gear without contaminating the spring itself. Drill and other training occupied the men for six days a week, but days were not so long as to limit time directed to those two favorite soldier tasks: cooking and eating. Issued camp fare included fresh and pickled beef, bacon, syrup, cornmeal, flour, rice, and coffee. The soldiers supplemented this with foodstuffs sent from home by messenger or brought by camp visitors.<sup>63</sup>

The newly enrolled soldiers whiled away time after the evening meal with visits from local citizens and writing and reading letters from home. Diversions away from the



camp confines numbered few since Griffin offered only the distractions present in a very small town. The men especially appreciated female visitors, but they more times than not invoked feelings of wives, sisters, daughters, and other family members at home.<sup>64</sup>

The 44th Georgia soldiers drilled under the warming spring sun, but few in the ranks felt a sense of immediacy about it. There was some talk in camp about incorporating the regiment into Cobb's Georgia Legion, a proposal supposedly favorably entertained by Colonel Smith. Men speculated when and where the Richmond government would call for their services and on Friday, April 4, that call came with orders directing them to Goldsboro, North Carolina. Barely two and a half weeks in existence, the 44th Georgia began immediately making preparations for moving out and joining the war.<sup>65</sup>

After spending the weekend breaking camp and sending letters and unneeded belongings home, the regiment boarded train cars at Griffin around 2:45 P.M. Monday, April 7. Colonel Smith had yet to join the regiment, and Company B's Captain Key supervised movement preparations. During the regiment's organization, six company captains held dates of rank senior to Key, a factor Key himself noted as he went about his tasks.<sup>66</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Estes, Major Banks, and the other captains, if truly absent during this time, probably had duties elsewhere during the departure from Griffin.

The train locomotive pulled the 44th Georgia travelers south to Macon. After a short delay changing engines, the train reached Augusta shortly after 8 A.M. Tuesday, April 8. The men piled off the cars to stretch kinked muscles and looked for something to eat. Just before noon, officers called the men back into ranks and directed them onto a

new train headed out of Georgia. The train chugged eastward on the South Carolina Railroad through the sandy pine forests, turned north at Branchville and reached Kingsville, near present day Wateree, about a quarter before four Wednesday morning. Soldiers grumbled in the dark and rain as engines changed to the set that would take them to Wilmington, North Carolina, via the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad. Another day and night of riding the rails brought the 44th Georgia to Wilmington shortly after 1 A.M. Thursday, April 10. The men dozed in the boxcars around small warming fires until daybreak. No railroad bridge spanned the Cape Fear River at the time, so two steamboat loads ferried men and regimental baggage across. Boarding a new set of open traincars, the 44th Georgia started the final trip leg up the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad to Goldsboro.

The soldiers huddled under blankets and coats to ward off the chilly wind in the open cars. Goldsboro's train yard saw the 44th's exhausted soldiers pull in just after 11 P.M. Thursday. Captain Key remained in charge of the regiment and he directed the men to build small fires beside the tracks under the car shed and lay down beside them to wait until sunrise.<sup>67</sup>

Awaking to a heavy frost, the men stirred the ashes from the night before to light small cookfires. With breakfast over, such as it was, the regiment formed a marching column and moved to Camp McIntosh. With tents pitched, the men rested while senior officers made acquaintances with other officers from the 44th Georgia's new brigade commanded by Brigadier General John G. Walker. General Walker commanded the 8th Texas Cavalry briefly before taking command of a brigade at Camp McIntosh composed

of the 1st North Carolina Infantry, 3rd North Carolina Infantry, 3rd Arkansas Infantry, and 30th Virginia Infantry.<sup>68</sup>

Goldsboro grew as a town at the junction of the north-south Wilmington and Weldon and east-west North Carolina and Atlantic rails. Railroad and road bridges over the Neuse River about four miles south of the city greatly enhanced the area's already considerable strategic line of communication value. Union amphibious encroachments along North Carolina's coast in early 1862 greatly alarmed Confederate authorities for the safety of these bridges and railroads at Goldsboro and other points. The evacuation of New Bern on the Neuse River to an advancing Federal force on March 14th caused considerable panic for the safety of communication links in the vicinity of Goldsboro. To counter this and other threats, the Richmond government directed General Theophilus H. Holmes to take his division of troops from Virginia to Goldsboro. Holmes' regiments moved by rail and completed displacement by the last week of March. Walker's Brigade formed part of Holmes' Division.<sup>69</sup>

General Holmes certainly had his hands full with responsibility to defend the port of Wilmington, block Union advances from New Bern, and arm and train regiments forwarded to him. To this end, the Richmond government made arrangements to send several shipments of Enfield rifles by rail to Goldsboro despite strong pleas from the North Carolina Adjutant General to send them instead to Raleigh to arm North Carolina regiments forming there.<sup>70</sup> Camp McIntosh honored Confederate General James McIntosh, a casualty at the Battle of Elkhorn Tavern fought in Arkansas the month before the 44th Georgia arrived in North Carolina. The 44th Georgia and sister regiments

initially called the site Camp Georgia, but Camp McIntosh generally came into use to describe a series of regimental camps close to one another.<sup>71</sup> The 44th Georgia's own camp occupied ground about three miles east of Goldsboro near the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad right of way.<sup>72</sup> The ground ran generally level, greatly aiding the encampment's secondary purpose as a training area, but at the same time hindering drainage of rainwater.<sup>73</sup>

Initially, the lack of nearby wood and water supplies greatly inconvenienced all regiments camping at McIntosh. However, officers arranged for firewood to be hauled from a wooded area to the camp. Wells dug inside the camp provided a source of freshwater,<sup>74</sup> although the men did not appreciate how quickly these wells could be contaminated by runoff of camp filth. At the time the 44th Georgia arrived at Camp McIntosh, the camp provided accommodations for at least four brigades of troops with limited sanitary facilities.<sup>75</sup>

Until moving to Goldsboro, the 44th Georgia practiced drill with a mixed variety of militia and personally owned weapons. On Friday, April 12, one day after the regiment arrived, a train bearing crates of brand new Enfield rifles pulled into the Goldsboro depot. General Holmes decided to equip the entire 44th Georgia with these weapons, and on Saturday issued the rifles with sets of accouterments to the regiment. The fine weapons caused quite a stir in the 44th ranks, encouraging some to boast that they "could knock a Yankee over at half mile or more."<sup>76</sup> Apparently Holmes' issue of Enfields en masse to the 44th caused a stir elsewhere in the Confederate high command. In correspondence with General Robert E. Lee, Holmes received permission to arm

regiments as he saw fit. Holmes opted to arm the three new Georgia regiments, the 44th, 45th, and 49th outfits, completely rather than parcel out the weapons piecemeal. Lee urged Holmes to reconsider, take back the weapons, and arm the two flank companies of all the regiments around Goldsboro instead. General Holmes tactfully ignored this advice and the Enfields stayed in the hands of the 44th Georgia Infantry and their Georgia brethren.<sup>77</sup>

Colonel Smith arrived at Camp McIntosh about the last week of April and immediately set about drilling the regiment in battalion and regimental maneuvers. The men became accustomed to tramping about the drill field until they wore the grass to bare soil. Clouds of dust filled their eyes and mouths and many complained of feeling filthy after drill. Even so, Colonel Smith's competence and bearing earned the deep respect of the regimental rank and file.<sup>78</sup> Smith particularly impressed many with his interest in the spiritual welfare of troops in his charge.<sup>79</sup>

Besides new Enfield rifles, the 44th Georgia at Camp McIntosh took issue of another facet of soldier life in the Civil War. Sickness and disease, already a nuisance at Camp Stephens before the regiment left Georgia, began to deplete the regiment's strength. Impure water and suspect sanitation practices put many men down with dysentery. A variety of ailments all came under the loose heading of "camp fever." Company I's Private Berry Rowland, a twenty-one-year-old farm laborer, died of disease April 27. Private Jackson P. Trammell of Company died of an unknown ailment May 17. This would be a depressingly common occurrence in the months ahead.

On May 1, the 44th Georgia dispatched a detachment to post guard on a railroad bridge carrying the Wilmington and Weldon rails across the Northeast Cape Fear River nine miles above Wilmington. The detachment protected the bridge from a possible Federal raid from Topsail Sound about twelve miles to the east. After about ten days guarding the bridge, the detachment returned to Goldsboro.<sup>80</sup> As the regiment drilled and pulled sentry duty on the banks at the Neuse River, enrolling officers in the home counties forwarded more 44th Georgia recruits to Camp McIntosh. Over 200 men joined the regiment at Goldsboro in the first half of May. This number joining represented by far the largest number of men to enlist in the regiment at any time since muster. Why the 200 or so men did not join the regiment at its organization can be partially explained. No less than eighteen men enlisted in Company F directly from service in Company B, 2nd Georgia Infantry Battalion as their initial enlistment terms of twelve months expired in April.<sup>81</sup> Colonel Smith commanded that Company B prior to winning the colonelcy of the 44th Georgia and obviously appealed to the men to join his regiment. It is highly likely that he accompanied them to Camp McIntosh. Company K picked up ten men serving in Company E, 3rd Regiment, Georgia State Troops as their terms of enlistment ran out. Both groups of men and many individuals in the same circumstance added welcome drill proficiency and experience to the regiment.

Company F received thirty-seven men at Camp McIntosh, the largest total received by any of the ten companies.<sup>82</sup> Captain Hitchcock led the smallest company in the 44th Georgia and expressed his concern earlier while at Camp Stephens.<sup>83</sup> He welcomed in particular one of the new recruits, his son David L. Hitchcock Jr. The

younger Hitchcock came to Company F fresh from service in Company B, 2nd Georgia Battalion. Besides military service commitments, the new volunteers' reasons for joining the regiment two months late varied widely. A few carried some exempt status but signed on after their friends left for army service. Some men, among them Private James S. O'Neal of Greene County, had expectant wives due in March or April. It is possible militia officials delayed their service until the child could arrive. Some could have been granted a temporary time to conclude personal business. Some undoubtedly wished to avoid service in any capacity and failed to appear at the initial militia musters. It was fortunate for the unit that many new recruits joined the 44th Georgia at Camp McIntosh. The regiment needed the new enlistments to combat losses from disease. Measles in particular affected the Putnam County men. Private James C. Brooking of Company F died in camp from measles on May 8 and more men would follow his fate.<sup>84</sup>

Federal General Burnside's advance from New Bern failed to seriously threaten Goldsboro, and by early May General McClellan began his Peninsular Campaign march on Richmond. General Holmes reorganized his regiments in the interim, adding French's Virginia Battery of Artillery to Walker's Brigade. In response to Richmond's summons, the 3rd Arkansas and 30th Virginia departed Goldsboro after receiving movement orders on May 23.<sup>85</sup> The 44th Georgia boarded trains at Goldsboro for the trip to Richmond on Tuesday, May 27. Lieutenant Harris reported in his diary that all were on "'tip toe' to get to Richmond, where they could get a crack at the Yankees." Later, after having seen the horrors of war, he returned to jot down "if I was at Goldsboro I should not get mad about not being sent to Richmond."<sup>86</sup>

As the regiment departed Camp McIntosh, it left behind fresh graves in the Willowdale Cemetery in Goldsboro, filled with more victims of disease. Several men in the camp hospital and too sick to move perished after the regiment moved out for Richmond. At least fourteen men who died of disease while at the camp are still buried in Goldsboro. Relatives in Georgia either could not afford to bring the bodies home or elected to let them rest eternally in North Carolina.<sup>87</sup> Wish as they might to defend Richmond, the regiment's men still would have railroad defense duties to perform in North Carolina. While the 44th was enroute up the Weldon Railroad, Confederate authorities anticipated another Union threat from the Atlantic coast, this time directed at Weldon.

Weldon, like Goldsboro, owed its strategic value to transportation. The town acted as western terminus to the Seaboard and Roanoke Railroad. The Raleigh and Gaston Railroad connected to the Weldon Railroad here before the Weldon Railroad crossed the Roanoke River. Over this railroad bridge flowed nearly half of North Carolina's food and material contributions to Southern armies in the Virginia theater of operations.<sup>88</sup> Arriving at Weldon on Wednesday morning, May 28, the 44th Georgia detrained and formed into companies. The left wing companies crossed the Roanoke and made camp. The right wing stayed on the southern side of the river. Facing downriver, the regiment stayed around Weldon for two days. The country boys in the regiment took a large number of fish from the river and cooked them on the banks.<sup>89</sup> The threat to Weldon did not materialize and the military situation around Richmond grew increasingly desperate as McClellan campaigned closer to the city. The 44th Georgia Infantry boarded trains again



for the Confederate capital on May 30. With no more railroad guard duty detours in sight, the war would wait no longer to blood the 44th Georgia Infantry.<sup>90</sup>

### Friends, Families, Farms, and Firesides

As the 44th Georgia Infantry rocked along over the rails toward Richmond, the men probably did not dream of how sorely tested the regiment would be in just a few weeks' time. The men would need to unite and stick together as a regiment to have any hope of survival, much less finish the war victorious. The key factors of shared occupations, religion, family, leadership, and training all contributed to the 44th Georgia's remarkable perseverance and cohesion.

Using the Federal Census of Georgia for 1860, 881 of the 1,315 men serving in the regiment at one time or another during the Civil War can be identified.<sup>91</sup> The 1850 Census surfaced 170 more.<sup>92</sup> Of these 1,051 found, occupations can be ascertained for 766 of them. Many could not be found due to errors, incomplete enumeration, or the fact that their families did not yet live in one of the regimental source counties. Over 200 men can be identified but have no occupation listed, again most likely because of incomplete recording. Almost without exception the soldiers appearing in the 1850 census are minor children not old enough to work.<sup>93</sup>

The census statistics overwhelmingly connect the rank and file of the 44th Georgia with agricultural pursuits. No less than 324 of 766 (42 percent) have "farmer" as their occupation. This figure would undoubtedly be higher if all heads of households had an occupation listed. The occupation title of farmer may be misleading because census

takers used it to describe everyone from the owners of the largest plantations to the smallest farmer with a net worth of less than \$100 in 1860.<sup>94</sup> “Farm laborer,” “laborer,” and “day laborer” are grouped with each other and together appear as the second most numerous occupation with 214 (30 percent). Men listing this line of work most often appeared as sons of a farmer. Their father or widowed mother could be either an affluent planter or a small independent farmer.

An additional thirty-nine (5 percent) list their work as “farm manager” or “overseer.” Large farms and plantations needed an efficient overseer to run the demanding and complex operation and, in many cases, direct the work of slave labor. Combining farmer, farm laborer, and overseers, the 44th Georgia sample indicates that nearly eight out of ten men serving in the regiment worked the soil directly for a living. This overseer figure is also a good clue that many of the 44th Georgia men came from farms not large or prosperous enough to need an overseer.

The fourth most numerous occupation appearing in the census for future 44th Georgia soldiers in 1860 is that of ninety-two “students” (12 percent).<sup>95</sup> Men with this occupation in 1860 often appear in the households of farming families, but the families are generally higher on the economic scale. Whether the young men attended school away from home or helped out in the fields when not going to school, they also depended on the soil and the cotton cash crop system through their families.

Table 1. Occupations appearing within the regiment in small numbers

Clerk	12	Minister	3	Millwright	1
Teacher	10	Carriage maker/waggoneer	3	Papermaker	1
Carpenter	9	Shoemaker	2	Editor	1
Doctor	8	Barkeeper	2	Painter	1
Merchant	8	Stonecutter	2	Woodworkman	1
Blacksmith	6	Grocer	2	Peddler	1
Factory maker	5	Ditcher	2	"Gentleman"	1
Wheelwright	4	Stable operator	1	Ambrotypist	1
Lawyer	4	Railroad worker	1	Clerk of Superior Court	1
Engineer/mechanic	4	Furniture maker	1		

Source: *1860 Census*

The typical 44th Georgia soldier unquestionably depended on the cotton-based agricultural system then in place for his livelihood. If he did not work the soil directly, then he usually plied a trade that directly or indirectly serviced those who did. If he operated a large farm, he invariably owned slaves to work the operation. Even many small farmers used one or two slaves to assist them in the fields. Any threat to the Southern economic system threatened the men's prewar existence and most felt it would be worth resisting by force of arms, if necessary. This factor, probably equal to or more than any other, influenced the cohesion of the regiment and gave the men great staying power even through the most difficult and trying circumstances.

By and large, the typical 44th Georgia soldier firmly believed in the Almighty. He also felt that He at least approved of or understood the Southern side. This attitude is woven throughout the many pieces of correspondence and diary entries that survive from the regiment. Four ministers actively served in the 44th Georgia ranks as common

soldiers, not counting the few men who filled the post of Regimental Chaplain.<sup>96</sup> Privates William Sanders in Company K, Alfred Freeman in Company B, Emory F. Anderson in Company C, and Captain Hitchcock in Company F all maintained church congregations prior to enlisting. It is extremely likely that some of their congregational flocks served in the ranks with them. All of the former ministers undoubtedly used the pulpit to endorse service in the Confederate Army to men in their respective companies and the regiment as a whole. Although these military ministers' influence ended in mid-summer 1862 when the last of them left the service,<sup>97</sup> their presence and vocal support of the 44th Georgia helped to set a religious foundation for the regiment's confidence that the mission they undertook was indeed a worthy one. This feeling helped hold the regiment together.

The 44th Georgia's initial leadership came largely from men of some means and influence. The regimental commander practiced law, as did the commander of Company B. The captains from Company A and Company C practiced medicine. The initial leaders of Company D and Company K shared the title of educator. Company H's first captain stumped middle Georgia as a politician. The captains from Companies E and I could be called very successful farmers. The minister leading Company F rounded out the list of distinguished men elected to the first leadership posts on March 4, 1862.<sup>98</sup> These men, individually and as a group, led their communities before the Civil War. They assumed leadership roles in the community because of professional skill, business acumen, force of personality, popularity, or combinations of them. The soldiers knew the men and trusted them because the leaders' performances before the war in responsible

positions merited such trust. With only a couple of exceptions, the initial leadership did not let the men down as long as they served.

The men initially elected as lieutenants shared that same trust from the local communities. In time, with the death or disabling of the captain, the lieutenants moved up by election to the head of the company. Their places as lieutenants usually went, by vote, to one or more of the group of sergeants and corporals initially elected at the first musters. The sergeants and corporals might initially be less affluent, but they still occupied places of influence in their home counties because of character and respect earned before the war broke out. As with the captains, the corporals and sergeants that moved up provided steady, solid leadership before and after election to the officer ranks. This leadership factor helped unite the regiment to a common purpose during the struggle. Indeed, it can be argued that the leaders on election merely swapped work clothes for uniforms and continued to exert their leadership. It is highly likely that the leaders expected to return to those civilian leadership roles after the war. It is also highly likely that these leaders exerted pressure on themselves to give the best possible care and concern for their men. The rank and file soldiers also expected them to do so and supported their leadership with followership to make the regiment a responsive, cohesive unit.

In the 44th Georgia, a man in the ranks with no blood relative or relative by marriage in the same company represented a rare exception and not the rule. Again referring to the 1860 and 1850 census figures and the 1,051 men who can be found there, the number of blood relations is staggering. No less than 114 pairs of brothers served,

including two sets of twins. Three brothers serving together appear twenty-three times, and sets of four brothers surfaced five times.

Of the 1051 44th Georgia soldiers confirmed in the 1860 and 1850 census lists, a brother relationship affected at least 317 men. In addition there are eleven father and son pairings identified affecting another twenty-three men, because one man had two sons serving with him. This equates to 31 percent of the 1,051 men identified, nearly one in every three, having a close blood relative in the ranks alongside him.

Not all family relationships can be identified by the census records, but it is reasonable to assume the the presence of, for example, four households enumerated next to each other with a less than typical last name like "Osborne" shared a blood relationship. While these instances abound in the census records for 44th Georgia families, this fact alone could not justify their inclusion as a blood relation. However, it does indicate that if these relationships could be confirmed, the number of 44th Georgia soldiers having one or more blood relation cousin, uncle, or nephew when combined with the brother and father and son figures would push the total much higher than the proven 31 percent.

Married men routinely appear in the ranks of the 44th Georgia, with 313 or just over 29 percent of the 1,051 men identified in the census records appearing as married before the war. Between 1860 and 1862 many men married to start their own families. The marriage to a local female virtually assured a married 44th Georgia soldier had at least one, and sometimes many more, relatives by marriage serving with him. A complete study of marriage records from the ten source counties, when combined with

the blood relations, almost certainly would put the percentage of men serving with one or more relatives to nearly two out of three.

By way of illustration, of the ten original company captains, a blood relative in the regiment can be easily identified for nine of them. In seven cases, it is a brother, and in the other two cases it is a father and son relationship. Captain Hitchcock of Company F served with a son, and Captain Huie of Company G entered service with two of his boys.<sup>99</sup> Captain Peebles of Company A is an excellent example of relatives in a company. Peebles joined with his twin brothers. He married a Weems girl before the war, and three of his Weems brothers-in-law served with him in the company. So did another brother-in-law, Private Henry Moore, who had married Peebles' sister.<sup>100</sup> Peebles' relationships are probably very common throughout the 44th Georgia companies.

By any interpretation, the 44th Georgia Infantry could be justifiably called a family organization. This factor helped to hold the regiment together as the men in the ranks as well as the families at home shared the grief from double, triple and sometimes quadruple losses to one extended family from one particular battle. After losing a relative in battle, the men were reluctant to go home and risk soiling the sacrifice of the dead. They preferred to stick it out to the end until their own death, disablement, or the end of the war. Although the families justifiably worried about their soldier relative's safety, they generally supported this view.

The 44th Georgia trained as a unit to break in groups of recruits just twice during the war, initially at Camp Stephens and once more at Camp McIntosh. At no other time did the regiment experience a large group of new inductees, virtually guaranteeing

stability.<sup>101</sup> The men standing in the ranks in Griffin and Goldsboro provided the faces seen in the ranks at Appomattox. This helped the regiment to start together, train together, and stay together. The same can be said for the regimental junior leadership. In the initial weeks of organization at Camp Stephens, the regiment trained under leaders that would be out front for much of the remainder of the war. The men may have had their performance recognized with a promotion by vote, but the core formed and drilled at Camp Stephens and Camp McIntosh furnished many of the future leaders. Generally, the junior corporals became sergeants and then lieutenants and the men felt comfortable following them.

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph T. Derry, *Confederate Military History*, vol. 7: *Georgia* (Confederate Publishing Company, 1899; reprint, Wilmington: Broadfoot, 1987), 35.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph H. Crute, *Units of the Confederate States Army* (Midlothian, VA: Derwent Books, 1987), 80-123.

<sup>3</sup>Milledgeville (Georgia) *Southern Federal Union*, 13 February 1862.

<sup>4</sup>Derry, 35.

<sup>5</sup>Macon (Georgia) *Macon Telegraph*, 11 February 1862.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 13 February 1862.

<sup>7</sup>Vessie Thrasher Rainer, *Henry County, Georgia: Mother of Counties* (McDonough, Georgia: Henry County Historical Society, 1971), 273.

<sup>8</sup>Lillian Henderson, *Roster of the Confederate Soldiers of Georgia, 1861-1865*, vol. 4 (Hapeville, Georgia: Longino & Porter, 1960), 726-838.

<sup>9</sup>Rainer, 272.

<sup>10</sup>*Macon Telegraph*, 11 February 1862.

<sup>11</sup>Rainer, 273.



<sup>12</sup>*1860 Federal Census of Georgia* (hereafter cited as *1860 Census*).

<sup>13</sup>John C. Key, 20 April 1898 in "Reminiscences of the Civil War," a series appearing in the *Jasper County News* (Monticello, Georgia), 25 August 1898-13 April 1899.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>Kenneth Coleman, *Confederate Athens* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1968), 43.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Athens (Georgia) *Southern Watchman*, 20 March 1862.

<sup>19</sup>*1850 Federal Census of Georgia* (hereafter cited as *1850 Census*).

<sup>20</sup>Asbury H. Jackson, 23 March 1862, in a series of unpublished letters in Hardin Collection of Special Collections Department, Perkins Library at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 20 March 1862.

<sup>22</sup>*1860 Census*.

<sup>23</sup>Joseph Moore, letter to Scott T. Glass, 2 September 1995.

<sup>24</sup>*1860 Census*.

<sup>25</sup>David L. Hitchcock letter in the Eatonton (Georgia) *The Countryman*, 25 March 1862.

<sup>26</sup>*1860 Census*.

<sup>27</sup>Hitchcock, 25 March 1862.

<sup>28</sup>*1860 Census*.

<sup>29</sup>Jackson, 20 March 1862.

<sup>30</sup>Lizzie R. Mitchell, *History of Pike County, Georgia: 1822-1932*, (Spartanburg: Reprint Company, 1980), 46.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup>John H. Harris, "Diary of Captain John H. Harris" in appendix of *Confederate Stamps, Old Letters, and History* by Raynor Hubbell (1959).

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 14 March 1862.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 15 March 1862.

<sup>35</sup>*1860 Census.*

<sup>36</sup>T. B. Rice, *History of Greene County, Georgia*, ed. Carolyn W. Williams (Macon, GA: J. W. Burke Co., 1961), 403.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup>Henderson, 828.

<sup>39</sup>Rice, 403.

<sup>40</sup>Jackson, 16 March 1862.

<sup>41</sup>Hitchcock, 25 March 1862.

<sup>42</sup>Henderson, 726.

<sup>43</sup>*Macon Telegraph*, 4 March 1862.

<sup>44</sup>Henderson, 726

<sup>45</sup>Hitchcock, 25 March 1862.

<sup>46</sup>*1860 Census.*

<sup>47</sup>Henderson, 726

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup>Henderson, 727

<sup>50</sup>1860 Census.

<sup>51</sup>Jackson, 20 March 1862

<sup>52</sup>B. B. deGraffenrid to William H. Cumming, State of Georgia's *Adjutant General's Letter Book*, 2 February-4 April 1864, 116.

<sup>53</sup>Jackson, 20 March 1862.

<sup>54</sup>Hitchcock, 25 March 1862.

<sup>55</sup>Key, 25 August 1899.

<sup>56</sup>Issac E. Robertson, 25 March 1862, in United Daughters of the Confederacy Transcripts at Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia. Vol. 2, 258.

<sup>57</sup>Harris, 18 March 1862.

<sup>58</sup>Henderson, 728-828.

<sup>59</sup>William S. Smedlund, *Campfires of Georgia's Troops* (Kennesaw, GA: Kennesaw Mountain Press, 1994), 258.

<sup>60</sup>Jackson, 16 March 1862.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup>Key, 25 Aug 98.

<sup>63</sup>Jackson, 23 March 1862.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup>Key, 8 September 1898.

<sup>67</sup>Harris, 7 April 1862.

<sup>68</sup>Calvin L. Collier, *They'll Do To Tie To: The Story of the Third Arkansas Infantry, CSA*, (Little Rock: Pioneer Press, 1959), 63.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>*War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884; reprint, Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, 1985) Series I, Vol. 2, Part 2, 459. (Hereafter cited as *OR*, volume, part, and page number. All citations are Series I unless otherwise noted).

<sup>71</sup>Joseph B. Reese, 29 April 1862, letter of a series in Eatonton (Georgia) *The Countryman* 22 April 1862 to 18 October 1864.

<sup>72</sup>Smedlund, 205.

<sup>73</sup>Augusta (Georgia) *Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel*, 9 May 1862.

<sup>74</sup>Reese, 29 April 1862.

<sup>75</sup>*OR*, 9.2, 458-459.

<sup>76</sup>Harris, 7 April 1862.

<sup>77</sup>*OR*, 9.2, 458-463.

<sup>78</sup>Reese, 29 April 1862.

<sup>79</sup>*Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel*, 9 May 1862.

<sup>80</sup>Reese, 13 May 1862.

<sup>81</sup>Henderson, 716-816.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 785-795.

<sup>83</sup>Hitchcock, 25 March 1862.

<sup>84</sup>Reese, 13 May 1862.

<sup>85</sup>Collier, 63.

<sup>86</sup>Harris, 21 April 1862.

<sup>87</sup>Steve Evans, Chairman of North Carolina Confederate Burial Locator Project, letter to the author, subject "44th Georgia Burials in North Carolina," 17 September 1995.

<sup>88</sup>George B. Davis, Leslie J. Perry, and Joseph W. Kirkley, *The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War*, comp. Calvin D. Cowles (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1891-1895; reprint, New York: Fairfax Press, 1983) Plate 138, #1 (hereafter cited as *Atlas*, plate, and map number).

<sup>89</sup>Harris, 27 May 1862.

<sup>90</sup>Reese, 1 June 1862.

<sup>91</sup>*1860 Census*.

<sup>92</sup>*1850 Census*.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup>*1860 Census*.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup>Henderson, 716-816.

<sup>98</sup>*1860 Census*.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup>Joseph Moore, letter to the author, subject "Moore and Peebles families of Henry County," 14 August 1993.

<sup>101</sup>Henderson, 716-816.

## CHAPTER 2

### SEEING THE ELEPHANT

#### First Action: First Blood

At approximately 2 A.M. Sunday, May 31, the 44th Georgia soldiers rolled into Petersburg, Virginia. Thoroughly soaked by a hard rain and lacking a readily available campsite, part of the regiment moved through the dark streets to a large empty building, probably a tobacco warehouse, on Petersburg's Main Street. Part of the men stayed under the shelter of the car shed at trackside and several of the officers found accommodations in private homes. At 2 A.M. the next morning, the officers roused the men with instructions to prepare for the final leg to Richmond by packing and leaving the tents and personal baggage. The order stipulated each man to carry no more than his rifle, accouterments, haversack, and one blanket.<sup>1</sup> Colonel Smith evidently expected the regiment to be committed to battle very soon after detraining in Richmond and decided to leave heavy items behind in the interest of speed.

Arriving in Richmond about 10 A.M., the 44th Georgia marched from the train station to the town's Market House. While the regiment rested here, some Richmond ladies handed out cold snacks to the hungry men. The regiment moved out after a halt of about an hour toward the Seven Pines battlefield at the double-quick march.<sup>2</sup> This Sunday stroll under a hot sun greatly taxed the endurance of the men. The 44th Georgia's castoff blankets and knapsacks littered the road to a point four miles beyond the

Richmond city limit. Wounded Confederates and Federal prisoners from the Battle of Seven Pines then winding down, passed the regiment going the other way.

Soon the regiment reached a part of the field fought over the day before with the resulting wreckage of war. Dead horses littered the field. Here and there pools of dried blood marked where a soldier lay before being evacuated to the hospitals. At every hospital, the regiment passed by piles of amputated arms and legs.<sup>3</sup>

It was a sobering series of sights to say the least, made no better by the absence of creeks along the route that forced the men to drink water from wagon ruts that "was very muddy and tasted badly." Exhausted, the regiment rested for an hour or two on the battlefield before countermarching back to a point about two miles short of Richmond. Here the men flopped down in a wet clover field and fell asleep.<sup>4</sup> June 2 and the next day brought more hardships to the 44th Georgia. Roused from the clover field, the regiment stood by until about 10 A.M. when it filed out in the road and returned about four miles to a point near where they reversed march the afternoon before. The regiment formed part of a brigade battleline in some woods near the Seven Pines battlefield. Soon it began to rain in sheets and the regiment stood in shoe-deep water. Men went behind the battleline and built some brush shelters, but the rain soaked right through them. The tents left in Petersburg and the overcoats and blankets discarded on the march out of Richmond began to be sorely missed. The rain continued through June 4 with the regiment camping in the rain behind its line of battle.<sup>5</sup>

On Thursday, June 5, the 44th Georgia Infantry committed its first belligerent act. The regiment drew picket duties within the brigade that day. At about 10:30 P.M. the

regiment advanced the picket line into a swamp fronting the battleline. Despite remaining in the swamp all night, the men saw and heard nothing. On being relieved from picket duties around daybreak, the regiment returned to their brush tents to find that the tents left in Petersburg arrived during the night. The men promptly set the tents up.<sup>6</sup> Picket duty again occupied June 8 and 10 without incident with the regiment passing the next three days quietly in camp. Evidently during this time the Confederate Army transferred command of the brigade to General Roswell S. Ripley and placed it in General D. H. Hill's Division. Ripley, originally from Ohio, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1843. He served in the Mexican War in 1846-1847 and received two promotions for gallantry. After the Mexican War, he married into a Charleston, South Carolina, family and took up residence there. When South Carolina left the Union, he followed his adopted state.<sup>7</sup>

The wet weather, lack of dry clothing, and constantly standing in water accelerated the ravages of disease in the 44th Georgia. Already hurt by measles and other illnesses at Camp McIntosh, the regiment began experiencing a more marked increase in men carried on the sick list. Company D Private Thomas M. Goldman contracted the case of measles that started sweeping the regiment at Camp McIntosh. In fact, the doctors would not let him return to the 44th Georgia's sick detachment at Goldsboro and shipped him to a hospital in Petersburg instead.<sup>8</sup>

On Saturday evening, June 14, the 44th Georgia left its rear camp about four miles behind the main lines for another camp used temporarily by regiments on picket duty. The common soldiers did not know it, but Ripley received orders to advance the picket



line and attack the Federal outposts to his brigade's front.<sup>9</sup> He would do so with the 44th Georgia on the left, the 3rd North Carolina in the center, and the 1st North Carolina on the right. Ripley held the 48th Georgia in reserve. The resulting skirmish between the Williamsburg Road and the York River Railroad was the 44th Georgia Infantry's first smell of an enemy's gunpowder.<sup>10</sup>

Sunday, June 15, dawned overcast. Officers and sergeants formed ranks in camp for the march to the front line. Around 9 A.M., companies broke down into the skirmish lines to relieve a regiment placed on the picket line just a couple of hours earlier. The 44th Georgia men attributed this to the fact that they carried new Enfields, making them much better armed than many Confederate regiments at this stage of the war. Around 3 P.M., Colonel Smith walked behind the company lines and issued the order to advance. In skirmish order with five paces separating each man to the left and right, between three to six companies of 44th Georgia boys splashed into the swamp under a driving rain. The first half mile or so passed uneventfully. Shortly after that, Union pickets in the swamp opened fire on the advancing gray line at close range.<sup>11</sup>

The rain and thick vegetation allowed friend and foe to literally get within feet of each other without either's knowledge. Company C's Private Hull Jackson led a squad to barely five steps from a solitary Federal soldier sheltering behind a tree. Even at this close distance, Jackson could not be sure of the man's identity apparently because he wore some piece of uniform or equipment also common to the Confederate Army. Jackson told his men not to shoot, but the Federal soldier heard him and turned around. He had no difficulty identifying Jackson and his squad as hostile and immediately bolted

into the vegetation. Because of the rain, Jackson had carried his rifle under his coat, and the Federal took three huge leaps before Jackson could point the weapon and shoot. He fired blindly and missed.<sup>12</sup>

The companies continued to advance slowly under sporadic rifle fire from the blueclad pickets. Return fire from the 44th Georgia killed several of the Federals and the retreating pickets left their bodies behind.<sup>13</sup> When the 44th Georgia broke out of the swamp and came in sight of Federal abatis backed up by breastwork fortifications, Colonel Smith halted the advance and held in place. About 9 P.M. Ripley passed along instructions for the regiment to return to its original line of departure.<sup>14</sup> On regaining the starting line, the 44th Georgia sent a picket force back to within 100 yards of the Federal lines. The pickets remained out all night without fires to dry clothing or cook rations. Again the men had reason to lament the loss of overcoats and blankets on the march out of Richmond. At daybreak, the Federal pickets advanced and the lines traded shots again.<sup>15</sup>

Ripley reported the June 15 excursion as a success. The North Carolina regiments drove in the Federal pickets in the vicinity of the Seven Pines battlefield, supported by the 48th Georgia, and conducted some valuable reconnaissance. He credited the 44th Georgia with pushing back the Federal pickets in its sector and capturing one captain, ten privates, and twenty stands of arms at the cost of two killed and four wounded.<sup>16</sup> Company E lost one man captured.<sup>17</sup> Company D, the most heavily engaged of the 44th Georgia companies, was responsible for the Federal captures, although not specifically credited with doing so in Ripley's report.<sup>18</sup> In the exchange of gunfire, Private William

McCauley of Company D became the first battle fatality suffered by the 44th Georgia.

Company D also suffered three wounded men, two with gunshot wounds in the arm and one shot through the chest. All three men eventually recovered. Company C claimed the most number of Federals killed with no losses in return.<sup>19</sup>

General Ripley was not the only one reporting the effects of the skirmish. No less than General McClellan himself telegraphed U.S. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton on June 16 about the skirmish. He based his message on information from prisoners captured from the 1st North Carolina on the right of the 44th Georgia. The prisoners related that their brigade had recently arrived near Richmond and named the four other regiments in the brigade, including the 44th Georgia.<sup>20</sup>

After the early morning contact with Federal pickets, a regiment relieved the 44th Georgia. Returning to camp for a one day respite, the men dried their clothing and rested. Rotations on and off picket duty continued until June 21 when the regiment advanced again into the swamps to drive back the Union picket line. That done, the regiment retreated, then repeated the process again. These seesaw operations cost the 44th Georgia two more casualties.<sup>21</sup> One of them, Sergeant Francis Cumming Johnson of Company D, met his death.<sup>22</sup> His body was carried back toward Richmond on the Nine Mile Road to the Oakwood Cemetery and buried there, the first of over 50 44th Georgia soldiers still resting there.

The next day, the 44th Georgia rested behind the picket line in camp. On June 23, the men began receiving indications that the army intended to engage in large scale offensive actions in the very near future. In camp, officers passed word to the men to

draw and prepare three days' rations and be ready to march at a minute's notice. As the men bent over their cookfires, many speculated that the regiment would combine with the famous Stonewall Jackson in some way. Many undoubtedly felt certain that the next time they marched out of camp, it would be for an extended time. Events proved them right.

### Blood on the Banks of Beaverdam Creek

With General Joseph E. Johnston's serious wounding at the battle of Seven Pines on May 31, General Robert E. Lee assumed command of the Confederate forces shielding Richmond. Lee realized that to save Richmond, he had to immediately take action to drive General McClellan away from the city. The skirmishing on the picket lines involving the 44th Georgia and a host of other regiments in the first three weeks of June testified to Lee's aggressive nature. However, Lee refused to be content with merely denying McClellan some reconnaissance or trying to keep him off balance. No, Lee had much bigger fish to fry than advancing his picket lines. His moves pitting his Army of Northern Virginia against McClellan's Army of the Potomac during the last week of June and first day of July would become known as the Seven Days Battle. The 44th Georgia would play bloody parts in two of the Seven Days.

In the three weeks since taking command, Lee considered and opted against at least two offensive plans designed at seizing the initiative from McClellan. The plan Lee chose on June 16 involved secretly bringing troops operating northwest of Richmond in the Shenandoah Valley under General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson to the Richmond area to unite with him against McClellan. On June 21, Jackson began his forced march

southeast to Richmond. Jackson himself arrived to confer personally with Lee on June 23. With General Order Number 75, Lee outlined his plan to force McClellan's 115,000 men from Richmond's doorstep once Jackson united with the main forces north of Richmond. Lee decided to hold McClellan's four corps and roughly 76,000 men in the vicinity of the Seven Pines area and attack around his own left flank to destroy a portion of the Union Army north of the Chickahominy River. He planned to commit about 55,000 troops, including the 44th Georgia Infantry, to this operation very early on the morning of June 26.<sup>23</sup>

The watercourses of the Chickahominy River and Beaverdam Creek dominated the area where Lee chose to attack. The Chickahominy rose north of Richmond and meandered southeast, joining the James River far southeast of the city. The stream itself, at about forty feet wide, did not present as serious an obstacle to military maneuver as did the wide, deep swamps on either bank. Mechanicsville Bridge carried the Mechanicsville Turnpike across the river and provided the only practical crossing in the immediate area. Roughly seven miles north of the Chickahominy the Pamunkey River flowed on a parallel course. On the belt of ground running northwest to southeast between the two rivers is where Lee decided the best opportunity lay to strike McClellan a serious blow. An attack on Richmond from the east had to confine operations to the narrowing plain between the Chickahominy and the James or cross some part north of the Chickahominy.<sup>24</sup>

McClellan did just that by placing one of the five corps in his army on the northern bank. The V Corps, commanded by Brigadier General Fitz John Porter,

numbered just over 28,000.<sup>25</sup> Porter occupied excellent defensive terrain generally anchored on Beaverdam Creek, a stream running north to south to the east of Mechanicsville and flowing into the Chickahominy. The creek averaged chest high in depth and ranged from fifteen-to-thirty feet in width and flowed between two sloping ridgelines with the western ridge higher than the eastern one. Broken woodland lined both ridges, but the force holding the east side possessed clearer fields of fire and better observation. The Catlin family farm occupied land on the western ridge overlooking the creek. Cleared land stretched down the slope to the thick, tangled undergrowth lining the creek bank.<sup>26</sup>

Two roads crossed Beaverdam Creek in this area. First, in the north, Mechanicsville Turnpike became Old Church Road as it left the town and traveled eastward for a half-mile to cross Beaverdam on a good bridge. Cold Harbor Road, in the south, ran southeast from the town before turning sharply to the south and then east to cross the creek at Ellerson's Mill. The one-story wooden mill building sat near the Cold Harbor Road bridge. The mill operation impounded water from the creek near the crossing to create a filled millpond and millrace.<sup>27</sup>

Federal General George A. McCall's 9,000 soldier division composed of 12 regiments from the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps moved into the Mechanicsville area on June 19. The three brigades in the division could be called "Reserves" in name only because they had served since near the start of the war. McCall controlled three artillery batteries and McClellan allowed others placed nearby for McCall's support if he needed them. The officers in the Pennsylvania Reserves immediately recognized the value of

defending along Beaverdam Creek's eastern ridgeline. With a readily defensible piece of terrain in any case, they set the men to work improving the natural terrain. The regimental commanders selected locations for rifle positions on the front slope facing the creek. The troops labored around the clock digging these positions and cutting down vegetation that obstructed fields of fire near the creek.<sup>28</sup> Abatis went up in places on the western slope and around the creek itself.<sup>29</sup>

Protective embrasures for cannons supporting the infantry line went in on the ridgeline. These well sited emplacements behind the infantry positions allowed interlocking fire on bridge crossings, open fields, and roads. The high side walls of both the artillery and infantry positions proved excellent protection from rifle fire. Confederate riflemen would have to be very close to hit the gunners and footsoldiers.<sup>30</sup>

At about 2 A.M. on the morning of June 26, the 44th Georgia completed preparations for marching and departed its camp near the Williamsburg Road. A battalion of skirmishers composed of one company from each regiment in the brigade under the command of Colonel DeRosset of the 3rd North Carolina led the march. Colonel Smith detached Company K under Captain Beck for this battalion.<sup>31</sup> Smith still suffered from a type of fever, but he got out of his sickbed to lead the 44th Georgia in what he thought would be its first battle.<sup>32</sup> The regiment marched back into the Richmond outskirts, then picked up the Mechanicsville Turnpike and marched north toward the Chickahominy River. The 44th Georgia reached the high ground on the south bank along with the rest of D. H. Hill's Division at about 5 A.M. The men fell out on their arms to rest in a field beside the road to rest.<sup>33</sup>

Lee's initial plan called for Jackson to come down from the north and flank McCall's position at Beaverdam Creek. However, McCall's cavalry outposts successfully delayed Jackson for nearly six hours and upset the timetable. Lee by mid-morning had lost the element of surprise and McCall had his defense fully alerted.<sup>34</sup> The Confederate columns converged on the village of Mechanicsville and engaged in a sharp fight with regiments that McCall supported with artillery. This delayed the plan even further. It was not until nearly 4 P.M. that Union troops holding Mechanicsville abandoned it to the advancing Confederate infantry.<sup>35</sup>

During this phase of the battle, D. H. Hill could not throw the 44th Georgia into the fight. McCall's pickets had chopped out the middle section of the Mechanicsville Bridge and thrown it into the Chickahominy. Although Lee's orders specifically provided for the placement of an engineer officer with each division, D. H. Hill did not have an engineer readily available nor could his officers locate materials nearby to repair the center span. Men detailed from the waiting regiments set about making a narrow footbridge over the demolished section. As soon as this footbridge spanned the gap about 4 P.M., the skirmisher battalion with Company K, 44th Georgia hustled across followed by the rest of Ripley's Brigade. Hill's artillery batteries waited for the bridge repairs until later in the afternoon. By then they were too late to help to Ripley.<sup>36</sup>

Ripley formed a battleline about a half-mile beyond the bridge facing east. Union forces vacated the area around Mechanicsville, but still held the strong line behind Beaverdam Creek. Pender's Brigade from D. H. Hill's Division moved east of Mechanicsville to attack the center of the line and McCall's troops and artillery smashed



them back with heavy losses. The artillery that inflicted so much damage on Pender's attack came for the most part from two sections from two different batteries supporting McCall. They were a section from Battery K, 5th U. S. Artillery emplaced on the rise north of the mill<sup>37</sup> and a section from Battery B, 1st Pennsylvania Artillery.

Despite his losses, Pender still thought an opportunity existed to force through the Union left on Beaverdam and went searching for troops to assist with another attack. He found D. H. Hill near the Turnpike and requested more troops. Hill also received two messages urging him to attack that he could scarcely ignore. One was from President Davis who was observing the battle. Another was from Lee who, like Davis, was present and watching the progress of the battle. Certainly another factor concerned the fading daylight. Hill indicated his respect for the Federal defense and protested the instructions given him by Lee, but in the end he had no recourse but to attack.<sup>38</sup>

Hill directed Ripley to attack the Union left in the vicinity of Ellerson's Mill and to send regiments to support Pender. Colonel Smith stood nearby during the conversation and perceived that Hill directed the orders more at him than at Ripley. Smith asked Hill more than once to point out the battery that Hill wished to be taken by assault and neither time did he receive a satisfactory reply. When Hill grew impatient and seemed about to order another regiment to make the charge, Smith shouted "no, no, never: this regiment will charge the battery: you can't put me off in that manner, sir!" and strode angrily back to the 44th Georgia to align it for the attack.<sup>39</sup> In Hill's orders, Ripley expressly understood the task to be to assault a Federal battery in the vicinity of the mill building. He most likely assumed that the two Federal battery sections north and south of the mill

building came from one battery. He aligned his brigade with the 1st North Carolina on the right with the 44th Georgia on its left, and he sent the 48th Georgia and 3rd North Carolina to support Pender.<sup>40</sup>

Colonel Smith formed the 44th Georgia into a battleline on the Catlin property and used the Cold Harbor Road as a guide for his left flank. He advanced with the 1st North Carolina on his right about 7 P.M., orienting on the artillery pieces visible near Ellerson's Mill.<sup>41</sup> The advancing lines began receiving accurate artillery fire from the two Federal gun sections almost immediately. They also came into view of the gunners of at least three more Federal batteries stationed more to the north along Beaverdam Creek. Barely a few paces after the first cannon shells exploded, men started to topple from rifle fire. The Federal officer commanding the brigade of Pennsylvania Reserves later remarked that the advancing line stayed in full view of his entire line of rifle positions and batteries.<sup>42</sup> The line swept onward but did not return fire, hoping instead to gain the shelter of the vegetation in the low ground adjacent to the creek. Here the abatis, millpond, and millrace trapped the 44th Georgia battleline in a kill zone. The captains discovered that they could go neither forward across the creek nor backward over the fire swept field. The nine companies found whatever cover was available and tried to return the fire.

Losses to the Federal fire seriously affected the regimental command and control. Colonel Smith fell wounded, almost certainly from the artillery fire, very early in the advance and did not make it to the creek. Lieutenant Colonel Estes collapsed from a shellburst that wounded him, and Adjutant Wiley took a rifle ball through his thigh.<sup>43</sup>

The 44th Georgia's colorbearer, G. B. Millican from Company H, received eight gunshot wounds as a testament to the volume of the Federal fire.<sup>44</sup> Only darkness ended the slaughter when both sides could not see clearly enough to shoot and ceased firing by "mutual consent."<sup>45</sup> The Federals expended so many rounds that it was after 1 A.M. the next day before all companies fully replenished their cartridge boxes.<sup>46</sup> By a conservative estimate, the two Federal gun sections together fired about 575 shells and canister rounds during the attack.<sup>47</sup>

Captain Key led the remaining men through a ravine to the right toward the Chickahominy River. Reaching the swamps, they turned back to the west and finally reached the Mechanicsville Turnpike.<sup>48</sup> During this escape, the 44th Georgia evacuated only the slightly wounded soldiers. The moans of the wounded left behind in the darkness serenaded the Federal troops throughout the night according to Colonel John H. Taggart, commanding the 12th Pennsylvania Reserves.<sup>49</sup> As the survivors took stock near the Turnpike, they beheld the ruinous effect of the concentrated rifle and artillery fire on the 44th Georgia. The regiment began the day with a strength of 514 men. The detachment of Company K lowered the total to 464 making the charge. Of those who charged by the Catlin Farm and down to the creek, Ripley reported more than two weeks after the battle that 321 noncommissioned officers and privates were killed or wounded.<sup>50</sup> The losses to men and leadership suffered by the 44th Georgia were severe, although the reports do not agree on the totals. Lieutenant Colonel Estes, recovering two weeks after the battle, reported 335 in killed and wounded, a figure passed up the chain of command by Ripley in a report.<sup>51</sup> However, these figures do not agree with a compilation from

regimental service records reporting 63 killed and 133 wounded for a total of 196.<sup>52</sup> The discrepancy might be explained by adding the 129 men reported as missing by Captain Key<sup>53</sup> for a total of 325, much closer to that reported by Hill, Ripley, and Estes. Most of the missing men probably could not extricate themselves under cover of darkness and later rejoined the regiment. In any event, there is no doubt that the 44th Georgia came perilously near to destruction in its first battle as a regiment. The losses counted for very little since General McCall, who with General Stonewall Jackson very near his right flank, abandoned the strong Beaverdam Creek line by daybreak of June 27. In defending Beaverdam Creek, McCall's brigades lost less in killed and wounded combined than the 44th Georgia alone.<sup>54</sup>

Captain Lumpkin assembled the weary 44th Georgia survivors near the Mechanicsville Turnpike with great difficulty due to the very heavy losses of officers and non-commissioned officers. He accounted for only about 120 men. Captain Beck, with his company relieved from the skirmisher battalion, probably joined him there early on the morning of June 27.<sup>55</sup> A detachment from the 44th Georgia remnant formed under the command of Captain Key, along with a battalion sized element from the 1st North Carolina, to perform the duties of guarding the Mechanicsville Bridge. Key's secondary mission was collecting the wounded, and burying the dead. After completing these duties and relieved of bridge guard, Captain Key took the few men with him and returned to the camp left the night before to secure food for the regiment and to pick up any of the recovering sick who were fit enough to shoulder a rifle. He followed the army's march to rejoin the regiment with the food and reinforcements.<sup>56</sup>

With only approximately 170 men and despite being wounded himself, Captain Lumpkin followed the rest of Ripley's Brigade as it pursued the Federal forces vacating the Beaverdam Creek area east toward the crossroads of Cold Harbor.<sup>57</sup> Hill's Division marched from the battlefield by crossing Beaver Dam Creek on the Old Church Road, thus avoiding Ellerson's Mill and the scene of the 44th Georgia's slaughter the evening before. On reaching the crossroads at Cold Harbor, the 44th Georgia fragment stood in reserve along with the rest of the brigade for a short period before being ordered to the extreme right of Hill's Division.<sup>58</sup> General Fitz John Porter had abandoned the Beaverdam Creek line and moved southeast to establish a strong position supported by artillery on high ground behind Boatswain's Creek. The position protected bridges Federal engineers erected to aid McClellan in moving troops between the north and south banks of the Chickahominy River and the crossing of the York River Railroad. Lee, as before, intended to flank Porter's forces on the right, or east, and force them out of this strong position.<sup>59</sup>

General Lee sent his six divisions against the Federal position with D. H. Hill's Division taking position on the Army of Northern Virginia's left flank. Meandering Boatswain's Creek, marshy swamps, and tangled undergrowth kept this attack from being efficiently coordinated and executed. Hill's mission was to wheel down on the Federal right, but the dense swamp and undergrowth caused units to lose contact with each other or bunch too closely. Constriction of unit fronts pinched the 44th Georgia and its sister regiment 48th Georgia out of the advancing battleline. The same thickly wooded terrain protected the regiment from the effects of Federal artillery fire, and the 44th Georgia

luckily suffered just one soldier killed and two wounded throughout the day.<sup>60</sup> Although the division kept moving through the thick terrain, the 44th Georgia lost out on the opportunity to repay the Federals immediately for Mechanicsville. Hill sharply criticized Ripley and his handling of the brigade in his official report, accusing him of “not keeping it in hand and pressing vigorously to the front.”<sup>61</sup>

Many things elsewhere along the Confederate front did not go as planned that day. Lee’s forces shattered the Federal position in two places late in the day, but darkness ended the fighting. Again, in a repeat of the evening before, the Federal forces withdrew during the night. The 44th Georgia entered the next fight with a new colonel because on June 28 came word that Colonel Smith had died from sickness and the three wounds he suffered at Mechanicsville. Despite his absence from the regiment to recover from the shellburst wound inflicted at Mechanicsville, the small 44th Georgia element elected Lieutenant Colonel Estes to replace Smith. Captain Lumpkin was elected Lieutenant Colonel in recognition of his stalwart performance on the Mechanicsville battlefield and the two days since. It was he, and not Colonel Estes, who would lead the 44th Georgia through the next battle.<sup>62</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Lumpkin led his new regiment along the roads toward Grapevine Bridge over the Chickahominy River. General Lee again hoped to trap and destroy a significant portion of the Union army north of the river, but the opportunity slipped away again. The retreating Union forces crossed over Grapevine Bridge and then destroyed it to prevent use by the pursuing Confederates. On hearing word of the bridge’s destruction, Ripley’s Brigade bivouacked about a mile and a half north of the

bridge on June 29<sup>63</sup> and from there they could clearly hear the battle noise from Savage's Station fought that day.<sup>64</sup>

Early on Sunday, June 30, the 44th Georgia marched out of their bivouac with Hill's Division and crossed the repaired Grapevine Bridge over the Chickahominy River about 3 A.M.<sup>65</sup> The pursuit of McClellan's Army led through the battleground around Savage's Station and turned into a hike of ten miles or more. The regiment crossed White Oak Swamp on the Charles City Road and halted near the swamp while Union and Confederate forces tangled in the Battle of Glendale. It is about this time that Captain Key rejoined the regiment with food, convalescents, and men recently returned from furlough.<sup>66</sup> The focus of Confederate operations on that day was to gain possession of the crossroads around Glendale. Any Federal force moving southeast down the plain between the James and Chickahominy Rivers would have to pass through these series of crossroads. Lee won a narrow tactical victory at Glendale, but despite a hard fought battle, the Confederate forces could not coordinate sufficiently to trap a portion of McClellan's troops.<sup>67</sup> The few men left in the 44th Georgia ranks probably cared little for the result as the lack of coordination prevented Hill's Division from being engaged. The regiment rested through the evening of June 30 and into the next morning.<sup>68</sup>

#### No Rest on the Seventh Day

McClellan's Army of the Potomac retreated to Malvern Hill on the north bank of the James River. McClellan had shifted his base of operations from White House Landing on the Chickahominy River to Harrison's Landing on the James. At Malvern

Hill, McClellan could cover Harrison's Landing and draw on fire support from the numerous Union Navy gunboats in the river itself. The Union position rivaled the strength of the one at Beaverdam Creek. From the intersection of two roads that Lee had to use to approach the position, a gentle slope of cleared land stretched south for a quarter of a mile or more. Steeper slopes and creeks with the omnipresent tangled undergrowth prevented assaults from the east and west. A mile to the south, the James River screened the Union position. To get at the Federals, Lee would have to send his troops up the slope and into the teeth of the Federal defense.<sup>69</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Lumpkin led the 44th Georgia from its overnight camp near White Oak Swamp along the Willis Church Road, also called the Quaker Road, as the Army of Northern Virginia assembled to attack the strong Federal line at Malvern Hill. The regiment marched through the morning hours until halting south of Willis Church on the east side of the road along with the rest of Hill's Division.<sup>70</sup> Around this time, Generals Lee and Longstreet encountered Hill on the Willis Church Road. Hill had talked to a local minister who impressed on him the potential military strength of the Malvern Hill position. Hill counseled that if the Federals occupied Malvern Hill in force, it would be better to leave them alone. Longstreet laughed at Hill's concern and insisted that McClellan was nearly beaten.<sup>71</sup>

Lee and Longstreet agreed on a plan to bombard and break the Union position on the slope of Malvern Hill. The Confederate artillery had not performed well in the past week, for various reasons, and this day would be no different. For more than two hours, the Confederate batteries dueled with the longer range Union guns. The Federal gunners



certainly got the best of the engagement and disabled many Confederate guns and crews. The Confederate fire did not seriously damage the opposing position or troops, and Lee sought another way to get at the Federals.<sup>72</sup>

In mid-afternoon, Hill received an order for him to prepare to charge up the slope against the Union artillery and infantry. He was to move as soon as he heard a shout from Armistead's Brigade to his right announcing that Armistead had seen the Federal batteries to his front sufficiently suppressed to allow an assault. The charge was to be one with fixed bayonets. Around 6:30 P.M., Hill and his staff heard shouting to their right that they judged to be the attack signal and sent the brigades forward in the attack.<sup>73</sup> To make this advance, Hill's Division would have to fight its way through the tangled vines and woods and the stream of Western Creek. Instead of one sweep with roughly 8,000 men, Hill's attacks did not achieve the coordination that he wanted. The Union guns and infantry concentrated on each attack in turn.<sup>74</sup>

General Ripley attacked along with Colquitt's Brigade. As the battlelines broke out of the trees and undergrowth they closed within 400 yards of the Federal guns. The cannoneers switched to canister ammunition and in effect turned their pieces into huge shotguns. The combined canister and rifle fire smashed Colquitt and Ripley back and inflicted over 600 casualties on the two brigades.<sup>75</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Lumpkin with the 150 or so men left of the 44th Georgia fixed bayonets and charged uphill with this attack. As they advanced up the slope, men dropped from shells, canister, and bullets. Ripley ordered the brigade to lie down on the ground for cover and return fire. This fire was in some degree successful for it picked off some of the exposed Federal gunners and

slackened the artillery fire slightly. After about a half hour of punishment, Ripley withdrew the brigade to the base of Malvern Hill.<sup>76</sup> One 44th Georgia soldier called the storm of shot and shell “worse, if anything, than the first” comparing Malvern Hill to Beaverdam Creek.<sup>77</sup>

The onset of darkness and the inability to distinguish friend from foe in the dark, marshy undergrowth ended the fighting. Firing sputtered and then died out. Ripley moved with a part of his brigade back along the Willis Church Road, leaving the 44th Georgia and parts of other units in the woods along Western Creek. The skies opened with heavy rain the next morning. The 44th Georgia marched in the downpour to assemble with the rest of Ripley’s Brigade at Willis Church. From the church, the regiment moved into the woods and made camp in the rain.<sup>78</sup> As Lumpkin tried to sort the men out for the second time in less than a week, he found that Malvern Hill cost the regiment nine killed and forty wounded.<sup>79</sup> Five of the wounded would soon die.<sup>80</sup>

In a repeat of the aftermath of the slaughter at Beaverdam Creek, the Federal Army vacated the bloody slopes of Malvern Hill and moved back to entrenchments protecting Harrison’s Landing on the James River. With that last movement, Richmond experienced redemption. Except for a few reconnaissance movements, McClellan kept his troops around Harrison’s Landing while Lee refitted, reorganized, and replenished his savaged divisions. The 44th Georgia desperately needed such a respite to replace leaders and refill its ranks. The regiment occupied its bivouac area near Willis Church until July 9 when it started with the rest of the brigade for camps nearer the capital city.<sup>81</sup> The new camp was on the Petersburg Road south of Richmond.<sup>82</sup> It was named Camp Ripley in

honor of the brigade commander, whom members of the regiment have nicknamed “Old Rip”<sup>83</sup> if not for his skill then his bravery under fire. Whatever D. H. Hill’s feelings toward Ripley, “Old Rip” earned the respect of the 44th Georgia. The men settled into camp and then began detail work improving the Richmond defenses.

Table 2 indicates how high a price the 44th Georgia companies paid for the honor to defend Richmond during The Seven Days:<sup>84</sup>

Table 2. 44th Georgia Company Losses During the Seven Days’ Battles						
Company	Mechanicsville			Malvern Hill		
	KIA	MWIA	WIA	KIA	MWA	WIA
A	6	4	7	1-	-	-
B	3	7	9	-	1	1
C	10	3	10	-	-	1
D	12	1	11	-	-	-
E	6	6	6	1	-	-
F	7	8	7	-	1	1
G	6	3	11	1	-	1
H	8	11	17	1	2	1
I	4	5	9	-	-	1
K	-	-	-	4	1	8
44 GA STAFF	-	1	2	-	-	2
Totals	62	49	89	8	5	16

KIA represents those soldiers reported as killed outright on the battle field. MWIA are those soldiers wounded and brought to either field hospitals or ones in Richmond where they later died, usually within a month of their wounding. WIA reflects soldiers reported as wounded, but surviving their injury. Due to some inaccurate reporting and accounting, the figures for all three categories are probably higher to some

noticeable degree. Even so, with the figures available, the 44th Georgia lost 128 soldiers killed or dying of their wounds and an additional 109 wounded before the regiment could count four months in existence. Most of the dead that were not returned to Georgia received burials in Oakwood Cemetery on the Nine Mile Road east of Richmond. Some others filled graves in Hollywood Cemetery on the west side of the city.<sup>85</sup>

To get a firm appreciation for the devastation wrecked on the 44th Georgia one has only to read the letter of Lieutenant Addison Burnside dated July 8. He reported the ghastly events of June 26 and stated that only he and one other soldier from Company D remained to go into the battle of Malvern Hill on July 1. The other soldier, Thomas Mann, received a serious wound, making Burnside temporarily the only soldier left standing in a company that had enlisted 104 men on March 4.<sup>86</sup>

Scores of men faced painful recuperations from battle wounds. Company K's Private George Walls had a mangled left arm and hand to nurse. Corporal Joseph Scott of Company H went down with gunshot wounds through his left lung and shoulder and faced a long recovery period. Company G's Private George Banks hobbled around for weeks from wounds in his left side and leg. Perhaps the most miraculous recovery of all belonged to Private G. B. Millican, the colorbearer literally shot to shreds with eight wounds at Beaver Dam Creek. The twenty-eight-year-old Millican recovered and rejoined the regiment. He lived through the war and long afterwards, dying in 1909.<sup>87</sup>

At Camp Ripley the 44th Georgia battled with an enemy just as deadly as a Federal firing line. Disease continued carving large inroads in the regiment's strength. Soldiers died from tonsillitis, dysentery and other lower intestinal disorders, tetanus, and

the ubiquitous "fever."<sup>88</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Lumpkin himself again lay bedridden for several days with an illness.<sup>89</sup> Many soldiers applied for discharges based on disease contracted while in service or disability from wounds. Private Marion Jackson, 20, of Company B is just one example. Surgeons could not save his wounded right leg from Beaverdam Creek and amputated it July 13, putting an end to his service. Surgeons also released Company F's Private David Lawrence from service due to complications from typhoid pneumonia. To go along with many men legitimately disabled, one man each from Company B and Company I received discharges for "defective eyesight"<sup>90</sup> which, if anything, called into question the thoroughness of their initial physical examinations.

Captain Peebles left line service in July to accept a position as a surgeon and the promotion to major that accompanied the move. Second Lieutenant Credille bypassed First Lieutenant McKenzie to assume the captain's position. The men elected Private John W. Adams to fill the lieutenant vacancy.<sup>91</sup> Adams, 23, clerked before the war. He vaulted over two of his brothers currently serving as sergeants in the company.<sup>92</sup> A considerable number of officers tendered their resignations during July and early August. The captain replacing Lumpkin at the head of Company C resigned after barely one month, citing disability. Lieutenant Haygood then took the captaincy. The Company C officers remaining moved up to fill the vacancies, and the men elected Private N.B. Durham as a new lieutenant. Durham practiced medicine before the war, came from a distinguished family of physicians, and had a brother serving in the ranks before his discharge for illness at Camp McIntosh.<sup>93</sup>

Company B lost two of its lieutenants to resignations after the Seven Days.

Company F's Captain Hitchcock and Lieutenant Edwards requested their resignations the day before Beaverdam Creek. Lieutenants Pearson and Greene took over for them and the men elected Private J. B. Reese from the ranks as a new lieutenant. With the death of Captain Redding of Company H from wounds, leaders in the Pike company shifted around. Lieutenant John W. Butler became the third captain to lead the company.

Lieutenant Thomas Kendrick, who received a wound during the Seven Days, also moved up two grades in a month to First Lieutenant. His son Samuel, who joined with him, could not congratulate him. The young man had died at Camp Stephens from disease even before the regiment departed for Richmond.<sup>94</sup>

Combined with disease, discharges, resignations, and battle losses, the leadership of the 44th Georgia required nearly complete rebuilding. Table 3 illustrates the effect of just the battle losses on individual company leadership:<sup>95</sup>

Table 3. Leadership Battle Losses During the Seven Days' Battles	
44th GA Staff	Colonel and Sergeant Major mortally wounded, Adjutant wounded
A	1st Sergeant mortally wounded, 1st Corporal wounded
B	5th Sergeant killed, 4th Sergeant and 2d Corporal mortally wounded, 4th Corporal killed
C	Jr. 2d Lieutenant and 4th Corporal killed, 5th Sergeant and Captain wounded
D	2nd Lieutenant and 2nd Sergeant killed, Captain wounded
E	4 out of 5 Corporals mortally wounded, Jr. 2d Lieutenant wounded, 1st Sergeant injured by accident
F	3 out of 5 Sergeants mortally wounded
G -	3d Sergeant mortally wounded, 1st Lieutenant wounded
H -	Captain killed, 2d Lieutenant and 2d Sergeant mortally wounded, 3d Corporal wounded
I -	Captain killed
K -	Captain wounded

Besides new leaders, there was a new flank unit for the 44th Georgia. After the Seven Days Battle during the third week of July, the 48th Georgia left Ripley's Brigade in a swap for the 4th Georgia from Wright's Brigade. The stated cause for the transfer was the inability of Colonel Doles of the 4th Georgia to get along with General Wright. The leadership of the 48th Georgia did not favor the move because of like and respect for General Ripley, but did as ordered.<sup>96</sup> Several men in the 44th Georgia felt very good about swapping the 48th for the 4th. Company G, 4th Georgia consisted of men from Jasper County, as did Company B, 44th Georgia. The swap of regiments reunited Company B's Private Jarratt B. Kelley with his son John Kelley serving in Company G, 4th Georgia. The move also joined the Grubbs and Holland brothers in a similar fashion.<sup>97</sup> The 4th and 44th Georgia would brigade together for the rest of the war.

As the companies tried to sort themselves out and hold elections for leadership positions, the food the army supplied stayed deficient in quality and quantity. Fresh vegetables were not on the army's issued menu. However, besides the usual camp fare, the men purchased potatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, beets, tomatoes and eggs to supplement their diets.<sup>98</sup> The 44th Georgia left its camp near Richmond in August on a campaign designed to force McClellan away from the city with a strength not likely exceeding 200 men. This paled in comparison with the more than 900 initially accepted into service. The men surviving so far had withstood disease and battle. As they marched out to campaign they represented the most healthy and, thus far, the most fortunate.

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<sup>1</sup>Reese, 17 June 62.

<sup>2</sup>Harris, 1 June 1862.

<sup>3</sup>Reese, 17 June 1862

<sup>4</sup>Harris, 1 June 1862.

<sup>5</sup>Jackson, 5 June 1862.

<sup>6</sup>Harris, 5 June 1862.

<sup>7</sup>Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1959; reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1989), 257.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas M. Goldman, letter dated 1 June 1862 from a series of letters 1 June 1862 to early September 1864 in *The Goldman Brothers Civil War Letters*, transcript in the hand of Bobby Goldman, Duncanville, Texas.

<sup>9</sup>OR, 9.2, 601.

<sup>10</sup>OR, 11.2, 1051.

<sup>11</sup>Jackson, 21 June 1862.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Harris, 15 June 1862.

<sup>14</sup>Jackson, 21 June 1862.

<sup>15</sup>Harris, 15 June 1862.

<sup>16</sup>OR, 11.2, 1051-1052.

<sup>17</sup>Henderson, 783.

<sup>18</sup>Key, 1 September 1898.

<sup>19</sup>Jackson, 21 June 1862.

<sup>20</sup>OR, 11.3, 229-230.

<sup>21</sup>Harris, 21 June 1862.

<sup>22</sup>Henderson, 763.



<sup>23</sup>Clifford Dowdey, *The Seven Days: The Emergence of Robert E. Lee* (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1988), 133-138.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.* 152-153.

<sup>25</sup>Stephen W. Sears, *To the Gates of Richmond: The Peninsula Campaign* (New York: Ticknor and Fields: 1992), 195.

<sup>26</sup>*Atlas*, plate 21, #7.

<sup>27</sup>Sears, 201-203.

<sup>28</sup>J. R. Sypher, *History of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps* (Lancaster: PA: Elias Barr, & Co., 1865), 44-78.

<sup>29</sup>*OR*, 11.2, 648.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 407-412.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 657.

<sup>32</sup>Reese, 16 August 1862.

<sup>33</sup>*OR*, 11.2, 654.

<sup>34</sup>Joseph P. Cullen, *The Peninsula Campaign: McClellan and Lee Struggle for Richmond* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1973), 88-90.

<sup>35</sup>*OR*, 11.2, 233.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 647-654.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 623.

<sup>39</sup>Reese, 16 August 1862.

<sup>40</sup>*OR*, 11.2, 648-651.

<sup>41</sup>Harris, 26 June 1862.

<sup>42</sup>*OR*, 11.2, 426.

<sup>43</sup>Harris, 26 June 1862.

<sup>44</sup>Henry W. Thomas, *History of the Doles-Cook Brigade* (Atlanta, GA: Henry W. Thomas, 1903; reprint, Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1988), 570..

<sup>45</sup>*OR*, 11.2, 426.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>48</sup>Key, 1 September 1898.

<sup>49</sup>*OR*, 11.2, 426.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 648-649.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 656.

<sup>52</sup>Henderson, 716-816.

<sup>53</sup>Thomas.

<sup>54</sup>*OR*, 11.2, 386.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 650.

<sup>56</sup>Key, 1 September 1898.

<sup>57</sup>*OR*, 11.2, 648-649.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 624.

<sup>59</sup>Sears, 210-248.

<sup>60</sup>Henderson, 763-774.

<sup>61</sup>*OR*, 11.2, 624-626.

<sup>62</sup>Henderson, 716-763.

<sup>63</sup>*OR*, 11.2, 642-643.

<sup>64</sup>Harris, 29 June 1862.

<sup>65</sup>*OR*, 11.2, 627.

<sup>66</sup>Harris, 30 June 1862.

<sup>67</sup>Sears, 307.

<sup>68</sup>Harris, 30 June 1862.

<sup>69</sup>Frances H. Kennedy, ed., *The Civil War Battlefield Guide* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1990), 66.

<sup>70</sup>OR, 11.2, 627.

<sup>71</sup>Sears, 314.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 318-326.

<sup>73</sup>OR, 11.2, 628.

<sup>74</sup>Sears, 326-327.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>OR, 11.2, 630-631.

<sup>77</sup>Addison M. Burnside, 8 July 1862, Miscellaneous Manuscript File 157, Accession 59-115, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia. Hereafter referred to as "Burnside" and date.

<sup>78</sup>Harris, 2 July 1862.

<sup>79</sup>Key, 8 September 1898.

<sup>80</sup>Henderson, 716-816.

<sup>81</sup>Harris, 2-12 July 1862.

<sup>82</sup>Smedlund, 238.

<sup>83</sup>Jackson, 27 July 1862.

<sup>84</sup>Henderson, 716-816.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Burnside, 8 July 1862.

<sup>87</sup>Henderson, 716-816.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Jackson, 27 July 1862.

<sup>90</sup>Henderson, 716-816.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 728.

<sup>92</sup>*1860 Census.*

<sup>93</sup>Henderson, 755.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 716-816.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

<sup>96</sup>Jackson, 27 July 1862

<sup>97</sup>*1860 Census.*

<sup>98</sup>Reese, 9 August 1862.

## CHAPTER 3

### SHARPSBURG AND THE CORNFIELD

#### Second Bull Run Campaign

To break the impasse developing around Richmond, President Lincoln appointed General Henry Halleck as senior to both General McClellan and General John Pope who commanded Federal forces in northern Virginia. Halleck did not agree with the operational concept of maintaining two widely separated armies. On August 4, he ordered McClellan to bring his army back from around Harrison's Landing and cooperate with Pope in northern Virginia. Lee had by this time detached Stonewall Jackson to maneuver against Pope. Hill's Division and the 44th Georgia remained to improve the defenses south of Richmond until Lee could be sure of McClellan's intentions. McClellan characteristically dallied in repositioning the troops to northern Virginia and Lee pounced on the opportunity to move almost all his forces north to attack Pope before McClellan could unite with him.<sup>1</sup>

Early on August 19, the 44th Georgia left camp south of Richmond and boarded a train for Gordonsville, arriving there about noon the same day. With Colonel Estes still recovering from his wound suffered at Mechanicsville, Lieutenant Colonel Lumpkin remained in command. Again the 44th traveled light to an expected fight because the baggage moved by a separate train. The regiment camped around Gordonsville for over a week awaiting the arrival of two sister brigades marching there. On August 27, a very ill Colonel Lumpkin departed for Georgia on a sick furlough leaving Captain Key in

command.<sup>2</sup> Lumpkin had battled illness the entire summer and needed a lengthy recovery. Besides the reins to the regiment, Lumpkin left Key his horse as well. Key used the animal for a packhorse to carry odds and ends for the regiment, but very seldom rode him.<sup>3</sup>

Rations issued to troops around Gordonsville consisted of hardtack crackers and poor quality bacon. The army commissary officers attempted to buy local corn to supplement the food supply. After some initial purchases, the farmers refused to sell any more and posted guards on the cornfields to prevent theft. The 44th Georgia men proved very skillful at eluding the guards and collecting roasting ears of corn. General Ripley learned of this practice and instead of disapproval, he offered the advice of “don’t let the guard see you. You must flank ‘em.”<sup>4</sup>

Along with thousands of men maneuvering about the Virginia countryside, the 44th Georgia marched on August 27 north to Rapidan Station on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. Camping for the night, the regiment moved at 4 A.M. the next day taking a route through the Cedar Mountain battleground where Stonewall Jackson had fought and won three weeks before. After a march of some twenty miles, the regiment reached Culpepper Court House in the evening, camped, and moved on to Amissville the next day.<sup>5</sup>

Hill’s Division and the 44th Georgia turned to the east from Amissville and moved to Warrenton, arriving on August 30. Local ladies cheerfully fed the soldiers with pies and cakes, an act the tired and hungry men greatly appreciated.<sup>6</sup> During the last two days as the 44th Georgia marched over the hot Virginia countryside, Stonewall Jackson

engaged Union forces around the 1st Manassas battlefield. The Battle of 2nd Manassas, although a clear-cut Confederate victory with the Union Army retreating, stretched Lee's manpower resources very thin. He needed D. H. Hill's Division on the battlefield to replace losses and give the Army of Northern Virginia more offensive striking power.

The line of march for the 44th Georgia reached out to Gainesville on August 30. On September 1, the regiment marched through the recent Manassas battleground to a point four miles east of Centerville. Unburied Federal corpses lay everywhere, considerably more bluecoated ones than the 44th Georgia had ever seen at this point in the war. That night the 44th Georgia paired with the 13th Alabama for picket duty in a driving rainstorm. The worn out, soaked, and cold men in both regiments little regretted missing the bloody battle fought the day before.<sup>7</sup>

September 2 found the regiment camped near a place called Stuart's Farm. Three days before, General Lee suffered an injury from his shying horse. The injuries to both his hands continued to trouble the army commander, and Regimental Surgeon Nathaniel S. Walker treated him as the nearest doctor. He administered to Lee's injured hands with bandages and liniment. He gave the bottle of liniment to Lee with instructions to keep using it until his hands healed.<sup>8</sup>

Apparently Surgeon Walker's treatment of Lee's injury relieved some of the pain satisfactorily. On the next day, Lee dispatched a long message to President Davis. The first sentence stated Lee's strong feeling about taking the war into Maryland. "The present," said Lee, "seems to be the most propitious time since the commencement of the

war for the Confederate Army to enter Maryland.” Lee wanted to sustain the momentum his Army of Northern Virginia bought on the Seven Days and Manassas battlefields.<sup>9</sup>

### Invasion of Maryland

As the freshest, or rather, least damaged of the Army of Northern Virginia’s divisions, D. H. Hill’s Division led the march toward Maryland. On Wednesday, September 3, Ripley’s Brigade and the 44th Georgia left camp and took the turnpike in the direction of Leesburg, Virginia. The regiment camped for the night near Dranesville. The next day the 44th Georgia filed back out on the road by 6:30 A.M. and reached a campsite near Leesburg about 5 P.M. that evening. The hard marching exhausted nearly all the men in the regiment since this constituted the first real marching the regiment had undertaken. They got the unexpected gift of rest until noon the next day.<sup>10</sup> The break apparently resulted from the delay caused by the army’s time consuming work to destroy the dams and locks of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal running along the north bank of the Potomac River.<sup>11</sup>

At noon, September 5th, the weary men fell in line and took up the march to the Potomac River. It was well past dark when the regiment splashed into the river at White’s Ford. The water level ran no more than mid-thigh to most men, although many tired feet took special note of the sharp, rocky bottom. Arriving on the Maryland shore about 10 P.M., the regiment went about one mile farther on to camp for the night. The next, day, a bright beautiful Sunday, the 44th Georgia marched north to the city of Frederick.<sup>12</sup>



With Pope's disastrous defeat at 2nd Manassas, General McClellan again assumed control in the field against Lee. On learning the Confederates had crossed into Maryland, McClellan shifted the Army of the Potomac north of the river to stay between them and Washington. He divided his army into three wings and slowly advanced on a broad front toward the northwest. The 44th Georgia remained in the vicinity of Frederick, virtually idle, for the next five days. On September 10, Lee issued Special Order No. 191 outlining the Confederate operational plan. The Army of Northern Virginia divided into four distinct march elements with widely separated objectives, including the encirclement and capture of the Union garrison and supplies at Harper's Ferry. The reserve artillery, ordnance, and supply wagon trains moved generally west from Frederick to Boonsboro, following the army main body.<sup>13</sup>

The Army of Northern Virginia sought to disappear behind the edifice of the South Mountain ridge with a cavalry screen guarding the gaps. D. H. Hill's division drew the assignment of rear guard and departed the Frederick area on September 11.<sup>14</sup> The division movement order had the 44th Georgia leaving Frederick to the northwest in the direction of Hagerstown. A march through beautiful fields and orchards took them three miles beyond Middletown for the night. On September 12, the regiment marched with the division up and over South Mountain, most likely traveling through Turner's Gap. The regiment camped beyond Boonsboro, only to countermarch the next day back to the town.<sup>15</sup> The soldiers subsisted on beef issued from the regimental commissaries and green corn gathered from farmers' fields.<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately, the copy of Special Order No. 191 directed to D. H. Hill had been lost or misrouted. A Federal sergeant found the lost copy in a field near Frederick on September 13. It was a find of incredible intelligence value, despite being three days old. With knowledge of his opponent's intentions, McClellan planned to force the gaps in South Mountain and fall on Lee's dispersed elements and defeat them in detail. Lee was stunned to learn from a Southern sympathizer the night of September 13 that McClellan possessed a copy of Special Order No. 191. After some hesitation about his courses of action, Lee moved quickly. D. H. Hill reversed march again with the mission to hold Turner's and Fox's gaps in South Mountain and buy the army time to assemble.<sup>17</sup>

#### Battle for South Mountain

In 1862, Turner's Gap carried the most militarily significant road over South Mountain. The National Road connected Frederick with Hagerstown by traversing South Mountain at Turner's Gap. The Old Sharpsburg Road split from the National Road in the valley east of South Mountain and crossed one mile south of Turner's Gap at Fox's Gap. The terrain at the two gaps featured steep elevations, rocky outcroppings, densely wooded draws, and twisting roads.<sup>18</sup> The defenses at both gaps depended on each other since if one gap gave way, the Confederates defending the other gap faced envelopment. If the Army of the Potomac could punch a major force through either of the two gaps, it would be closer to the widely scattered Confederate detachments than they were to each other.

Early on September 14th D. H. Hill reconnoitered the terrain Lee entrusted him to defend. From a vantage point near Turner's Gap, he could clearly see the advancing lines

of bluecoat soldiers. They comprised at least four divisions from the IX Corps, and two of the division commanders decided to make the main push through Fox's Gap. Hill positioned one of the two brigades with him in each of the gaps. He immediately sent messages to hurry reinforcements forward, including the 44th Georgia, but the Federal attack would commence before the help arrived.<sup>19</sup>

At mid-morning of Sunday, September 14, the 44th Georgia marched quickly out of camp near Boonsboro to the east toward South Mountain. Ripley's Brigade was short one of its four regiments because the detached 4th Georgia guarded Hamburg Pass north of Boonsboro on a special assignment. Ripley dispatched a recall message to the 4th Georgia, but too late for that regiment to join the brigade for the upcoming battle.<sup>20</sup>

Ripley's Brigade climbed the road to Turner's Gap about noon. The fight for the Confederates did not go well at Fox's Gap that morning and General Garland, commanding the brigade defending there, went down with a fatal wound. Aides moved his body down the west side of the mountain and the 44th Georgia passed his remains as they marched along.<sup>21</sup>

Near the crest at Turner's Gap the brigade shifted to the right, or south, along Wood Road to block Union forces pressing north from Fox's Gap. The regiments supported Bondurant's Battery just off the Wood Road as it engaged Union troops near the intersection of roads in Fox's Gap.<sup>22</sup> The 44th Georgia shortly moved to its right flank and down an extremely rough gorge. After another halt of undetermined duration, the regiment continued moving by the right flank over extremely challenging terrain.<sup>23</sup> The maneuver purported to establish contact with brigades of Confederates

reinforcements currently approaching Fox's Gap from the west along the Old Sharpsburg Road.

Ripley came out of the densely wooded slopes on the Old Sharpsburg Road in the vicinity of the Lampert House. Meeting with D. H. Hill near there, Ripley received an order to extend his right to link up with Confederates coming up the mountain. Hill ordered Ripley to take command of the two other brigades after the link-up and wheel left up the face of the ridge to drive the Federals out of Fox's Gap.<sup>24</sup>

Events indicated that Ripley apparently misunderstood his instructions. He moved to his right and established contact with only one of the brigades and then for some reason moved away from the Federals instead of toward them. Ripley did not have the reputation for avoiding combat, and in attempting to find and engage whatever Federal force he can, sent his three regiments in a series of marches and countermarches along the steep slopes.<sup>25</sup> One or two men received wounds from Federal skirmishers or stray bullets from the engagement at the top of the gap,<sup>26</sup> but Ripley's Brigade, according to D. H. Hill, "did not draw trigger; why I do not know."<sup>27</sup>

Even without a measurable contribution from Ripley, the defense of both gaps held long enough. With his mission of buying time complete, D. H. Hill moved away from the gaps after dark. After tramping about the hillsides to no gain, the 44th Georgia and its two sister North Carolina regiments assembled on the Old Sharpsburg Road around midnight.<sup>28</sup> Ripley apparently assumed in the darkness and confusing terrain that he was alone and unsupported. Since his brigade had plenty of ammunition remaining, it joined with two Confederate brigades arriving on the battlefield as the rearguard.<sup>29</sup>

The 44th Georgia began a night march down off the mountain in the direction of Boonsboro. As Ripley's Brigade filed through the town, it picked up the 4th Georgia and then turned southeast toward Sharpsburg. The brigade crossed Antietam Creek on the Middle Bridge and moved in column to its right to establish a battleline in case the Federals pursued closely. It was now around daybreak, September 15th.<sup>30</sup> It is here, on the west bank of the Antietam, that Lee assembled his 40,000 tired soldiers to turn and give battle to McClellan's pursuing force of 70,000.

### Harvest of Suffering

Defending at Sharpsburg afforded Lee several advantages. First, the terrain consisted of low hills around Antietam Creek. In holding these low elevations, Lee could make the best use of his outnumbered army. Second, Antietam Creek, although readily fordable through most of its course, was crossed by bridges in only three places. This tended to funnel Federal forces to crossing points that the Confederates could watch with minimal forces. Third, since the area sat in a loop of the Potomac River, Lee's flanks held some degree of security. Fourth, although subject to high water conditions, Lee had Boteler's Ford across the Potomac at his back to keep his line of withdrawal open. It also enabled Lee's scattered detachments to join him while he held McClellan at bay. And, finally, the Hagerstown Pike and other roads in the Confederate interior lines allowed shifting forces north and south to threatened points.<sup>31</sup>

The Hagerstown Pike left Sharpsburg and ran a course almost due north. Slightly less than one mile from the town, it passed by the Dunker Church on a small, low plateau.

The church occupied ground on the west side of the Pike. A few yards past the Dunker Church, the Smoketown Road entered the Pike at about a 45-degree angle from the northeast. The triangle formed by the intersection of the two roads first held a plowed field, then as the triangle expanded, became a cornfield owned by a farmer named Miller.<sup>32</sup>

On the south side of the Smoketown Road lay the Mumma Farm with a large house and outbuildings. Continuing on the Smoketown Road, a traveler ran into the East Woods in less than a half mile. Over on the other side of the triangle, the West Woods stretched up the west side of the Hagerstown Turnpike north of the Dunker Church with about twice the size of the East Woods. The 44th Georgia and Ripley's Brigade fought primarily in the Mumma Farm area, across the Smoketown Road, and into the fields inside the triangle. The terrain rolled gently with higher ground generally along the Smoketown Road and around Miller's cornfield. Besides a few sturdy wooden rail fences bordering the fields, the triangle lacked cover of any kind.<sup>33</sup>

As the 44th Georgia and sister regiments of Ripley's Brigade crossed Antietam Creek on September 15, they filed to the right and occupied positions north of the Boonsboro Road facing east. Ripley aligned the brigade with regiments from north to south being the 4th Georgia, 44th Georgia, 1st North Carolina, and 3rd North Carolina. The 3rd North Carolina's right rested on the Boonsboro Road.<sup>34</sup>

Surgeon Walker went ahead of the regiment into Sharpsburg and made the best use of his time looking about the town and bought ninety dozen eggs from a vendor. The enterprising physician found some iron kettles in the backyard of a home, built a fire, and

boiled the eggs. A detail carried the eggs straight out of the kettles to the regimental battleline along the Boonsboro Road to the famished 44th Georgia. The men devoured the eggs, no doubt supplemented with green corn and scrounged apples from nearby orchards. They spent the remainder of the day resting because the officers only minimally adjusted the positions of the regiments.<sup>35</sup>

The Confederates spent the majority of Tuesday, September 16, preparing for an attack as the Federal forces began arriving in strength on the east bank of the Antietam. In the early morning, the 44th Georgia heard cannonading in the distance and expected an attack that day or the next. At about 9 A.M., Union batteries posted across Antietam Creek opened fire on the Confederate troop positions. This fire, although not very accurate, caused some casualties in Ripley's Brigade and lasted until about dark. At around 9 P.M. that night, Ripley's Brigade shifted to the extreme left of D. H. Hill's Division. The new position covered a "road" stretching from the division's flank left to the Hagerstown Pike. This "road" could have been the Smoketown Road or the Mumma farm lane joining the Smoketown Road. In any event, the new position in the field southwest of the Mumma farm buildings covered both roads and supported several batteries in Lieutenant Colonel S. D. Lee's artillery battalion posted behind Ripley's Brigade. Trimble's Brigade commanded by Colonel James Walker settled in slightly forward of the position. The men laid down on their rifles after shifting over and slept soundly.<sup>36</sup>

The Army of the Potomac began moving into position to attack the army of Northern Virginia before dawn on September 17. The Federal I Corps, commanded by

General Hooker and the XII Corps commanded by General Mansfield moved against the part of the battlefield occupied by Ripley's Brigade and the 44th Georgia. The imminent Battle of Sharpsburg on September 17 marked the six-month anniversary of the 44th Georgia's acceptance into Confederate service. At daybreak, Federal artillery opened fire on D. H. Hill's Division from battery positions to the east and northeast across Antietam Creek.<sup>37</sup>

The majority of this fire came from Batteries A, B, C, and D of the New York Light Artillery operating as a provisional battalion of the Reserve Artillery near the Middle Bridge. Batteries A, B, and C employed the twenty-pound Parrott rifle and Battery D worked the thirty-two-pound howitzer. The pound figure referred to the weight of the projectile. The Parrott rifle in 1862 represented the heaviest rifled fieldpiece then in tactical use. It enjoyed a reputation for high accuracy when capably used. The thirty-two pounder also represented the heaviest howitzer used by either army in the field. Both cannons could fire spherical case ammunition against an infantry force a considerable distance away. In spherical case shells, a timed bursting charge scattered a large number of cast-iron balls down onto the target, in this case the infantrymen of Ripley's Brigade.<sup>38</sup>

Almost immediately the Federal gunners found the range of the 44th Georgia. The men stretched out on the ground for cover in formation along with the other three regiments as bursting shells showered them with lethal iron. General Ripley reported this fire as very severe for about an hour. The regiments did not displace, but continued to lay down on their rifles.<sup>39</sup> The men could see the burning fuses of the shells that went long and passed over them.<sup>40</sup>



This is the most likely time and place for the demise of Captain Pearson of Company F. As the 44th Georgia lay under this artillery fire, a piece of shell or shot struck Captain Pearson in the head and instantly killed him. Lieutenant J. B. Reese happened to be looking directly at the Captain when the fatal missile impacted. The death of the popular officer saddened all the men in the company.<sup>41</sup>

Ripley anticipated an attack from his front and he directed a detail from the 3rd North Carolina to burn the Mumma house and farm buildings to deny cover to any approaching Federal force. A squad from the regiment rushed to this task. The Mumma buildings quickly ignited, sending out thick smoke, intense heat, and a rain of ashes.

<sup>42</sup>About 8 A.M. Ripley ordered the brigade to its feet. Some enterprising soul in Company G had procured a pot and some pumpkins for stewing. The men had to leave the bubbling pot without sampling the contents because of the developing crisis to the brigade's front. They used strong language to express their displeasure.<sup>43</sup>

Trimble's Brigade very early engaged Colonel William Christian's Brigade of Federal troops attacking through the East Woods. Christian commanded the 88th and 90th Pennsylvania and 26th and 94th New York regiments. A dangerous gap opened in the Confederate line between Trimble's Brigade and supporting Confederate troops to its left. Ripley quickly spotted the danger and moved his four regiments into the hole.<sup>44</sup> The brigade contended with the crackling flames from the burning Mumma buildings as it struggled to form a battleline on the north side of the farm with the 4th Georgia, 44th Georgia, 1st North Carolina, and 3rd North Carolina aligned left to right. The 44th

Georgia men passed through the Mumma family cemetery to form on the other side.<sup>45</sup>

The line of battle faced generally northeast, orienting on the East Woods.

Christian's bluecoats pushed their advance down the Smoketown Road and into a cornfield to the south of the roadbed. Ripley strongly suspected the Federals outnumbered him, but he soon had another, more pressing matter to contemplate. The Pennsylvania and New York regiments quickly fired into Ripley's forming battleline, wounding Ripley himself in the throat. The volleys, coming from an unexpected direction and relatively short range, shocked the whole Confederate battleline. The blasts killed a handful of 44th Georgia soldiers at the north edge of the Mumma cemetery.<sup>46</sup> Ripley passed command over to Colonel Doles of the 4th Georgia and temporarily left the field for treatment. The regiments' return fire on Christian's Federals blocked their advance. The temporary check on Christian freed Ripley's Brigade to change front to the left in response to another serious, visible threat. Across the Smoketown Road, regiments from the Pennsylvania Reserves, the 44th Georgia's foe from Mechanicsville, and other Northern units had pushed back Confederate forces in Miller's Cornfield.<sup>47</sup>

Colonel Doles ordered the men to climb a sturdy rail fence bordering the Smoketown Road. The men clambered over the rails, formed hastily, faced north, and charged at the double-quick while shouting their "war whoops."<sup>48</sup> They kept up a brisk pace, stopping only to fire volleys at Union formations to their front and left oblique. As the brigade neared the boundary of Miller's cornfield, it turned and fired a volley into the 19th Indiana, catching that regiment in the act of climbing a fence along the Hagerstown Pike. The volley killed the 19th Indiana's colonel and a captain assumed command. The

Hoosiers fired a few shots each at Ripley's Brigade bearing down on them before the captain called for the regiment to withdraw. Bullets from the 19th Indiana splattered into several men in the 4th and 44th Georgia as the two regiments swept north toward the cornfield. The 6th Wisconsin also engaged the left of Ripley's line, but the 4th and 44th Georgia proved equal to the task at hand. The 19th Indiana and 6th Wisconsin pulled out under pressure from the two Georgia regiments, firing as they went.<sup>49</sup>

By now almost certainly in Miller's cornfield, the 4th and 44th Georgia confronted fire from the blueclad soldiers of General Marsena Patrick arrayed along a limestone shelf to the immediate west of the Hagerstown Pike. Patrick's 21st, 23rd, and 35th New York regiments had fought hard already that morning and had few cartridges left to fire at the approaching Georgians. The 21st New York quickly lost seventy-one men. Within fifteen minutes, Patrick's Brigade grudgingly gave ground north to the vicinity of Miller's farm and barn. The Confederates pressed after them losing men every step of the way.<sup>50</sup> Comrades scavenged the cartridge boxes of the fallen for more ammunition. It was not yet 7:30 A.M.

Regimental color-bearer Thomas J. Dingler led the way for the charge by waving the 44th Georgia colors. The sharp stubble of cornstalks bloodied his feet, but he maintained his position in front of the regiment with the flag. This display of bravery earned him special mention in General D. H. Hill's written report after the battle.<sup>51</sup> The charge led by Dingler north into the cornfield relieved a tremendous amount of strain on the Army of Northern Virginia's left flank. However, this relief proved temporary. Doles did not realize that he had rushed into a concave Federal firing line. To compound

the tactical dilemma, the 128th Pennsylvania posted itself behind a fence in front of the right of the advancing Southerners and literally shot the 1st and 3rd North Carolina to pieces. Doles' attack lost momentum because of casualties, the fast pace badly disorganized the brigade, and ammunition began to run low. Still, Doles pushed on toward the Miller homestead.<sup>52</sup>

Relatively fresh Union XII Corps regiments burst out of the East Woods and assailed the two reduced North Carolina regiments on Doles' right flank. The North Carolinians with nearly empty cartridge boxes changed front and put up a furious fight until forced to retire. The withdrawal uncovered the right flank of the 44th Georgia. The 44th Georgia, with barely any rounds left to defend itself, buckled under fire from two directions and the Federal counterattack. This uncovered the flank of the 4th Georgia and it could hold only a few seconds more before joining the 44th Georgia in a quick movement to relative safety west of the Dunker Church. By 8 A.M. the Federals owned Miller's cornfield again.<sup>53</sup> Expelling the 44th Georgia Infantry from the cornfield pared the regiment down to less than 100 men still able to bear arms.

The disorganized remainder of Ripley's Brigade crossed the Hagerstown Pike north of Dunker Church and entered the West Woods to reorganize. The 44th Georgia halted, reformed lines, and crossleveled ammunition taken from the dead and wounded. The men fixed bayonets in anticipation of the Federals following them into the woods, but that threat did not materialize. Colonel Doles soon ordered the brigade deeper into the woods because of Federal artillery rounds that crashed through the trees.<sup>54</sup> The

brigade tied in with Manning's Brigade southwest of the Dunker Church and prepared to repel another Federal assault.<sup>55</sup>

In less than an hour Colquitt's Brigade of one Alabama and four Georgia regiments passed through the 44th's position to make another try at wresting the cornfield from the Federals. The exhausted men greeted friends they recognized in Colquitt's ranks, then stood up and moved deeper into the woods to replenish their cartridge boxes, clean powder-fouled weapons, and get something to eat. The small snack constituted the first meal the 44th Georgia men consumed in forty hours.<sup>56</sup> Captain Key, still in command of the 44th Georgia and still on his feet, saw General Ripley as the men picked up more cartridges. The Federal bullet had hit Ripley's necktie and embedded some of the material in his throat. A hospital steward or surgeon tugged on the necktie and pulled out the flattened projectile. Ripley told Key that he had called for a drink of apple brandy to verify that he could still swallow.<sup>57</sup>

Ripley's Brigade and the 44th Georgia contributed materially to the survival of the Army of Northern Virginia's left flank at Sharpsburg. Federals under Generals Hooker and Mansfield seemed close to reaching the Dunker Church area and pushing through the West Woods early in the morning. Had they done so, Lee's army would have been cut almost in half and the penetrating Federal force would have been closer to Boteler's Ford than most of the Confederates. The 44th Georgia, Ripley's Brigade, and other brigade counterattacks blunted this effort, but at a terrible cost.

Vicious combat around Miller's cornfield virtually used up the 44th Georgia and the three other regiments of Ripley's brigade by 9 A.M. Starting with 162 men, the 44th

Georgia lost seventeen killed and sixty-five wounded in the fight on September 17th before 8 A.M., a casualty rate of nearly 51 percent. The rest of Ripley's Brigade lost 103 killed and 533 wounded for a casualty rate of over 47 percent. The brigade also counted 97 men missing.<sup>58</sup>

Captain Key reported a figure of seventeen deaths and sixty-five wounded as an eyewitness, a figure that agrees with regimental service records.<sup>59</sup> The service records go on to list three soldiers as mortally wounded. Only twenty-nine men are credited as wounded, but two factors might account for the low reported rate. First, many men with minor wounds felt compelled to stay in the ranks with their comrades during the desperate fighting. Second, the service records listed many men as "wounded in 1862." Some doubtless suffered those wounds at Sharpsburg.<sup>60</sup>

General Ripley shortly relinquished command again to Colonel Doles<sup>61</sup> and Doles soon ordered the brigade back into line in the early afternoon. The regiments occupied a line in the West Woods slightly forward than the line they vacated to resupply with ammunition. The orientation of the brigade faced generally northeast. The Brigade remained in this position throughout the rest of September 17 and all of September 18.<sup>62</sup>

The opposing armies glowered at each other, but neither side made any significant moves. Units tried to bury the dead and organize the living as best they could. Lee conceded the failure of his invasion plans and decided to take his battered army back into Virginia beginning on the evening of September 18. After dark on September 18, the 4th Georgia and both North Carolina regiments except two companies from the 3rd North Carolina withdrew as ordered by D. H. Hill. Captain Key assumed command of the 44th

Georgia/3rd North Carolina detachment and received instructions to screen the withdrawing troops until relieved by Confederate cavalry at or about midnight. The cavalry did not keep the appointment and by dawn they still had not appeared.<sup>63</sup>

Key grew increasingly worried. He checked both his flanks for friendly troops and found none. In the growing light of dawn, the 44th Georgia pickets detected movement of Federal troops to the front. Key quickly and as quietly as possible pulled the twelve companies back about 150 yards to a stone wall and prepared to fight it out there. The Federal troops either did not notice or chose not to pursue. This gave Key time to decide to leave the area by fighting his way out if necessary. The twelve companies took a road leading into Sharpsburg from the west. A thick blanket of early morning fog cloaked the town. The men moved down the streets to pick up the road leading to Boteler's Ford and safety. The column halted once at the unmistakable sounds of cavalry approaching. After a brief, nervous halt, the leading men determined that the oncoming riders wore gray and not blue uniforms.<sup>64</sup>

The Georgians and North Carolinians followed the cavalry rearguard toward Boteler's Ford. On a hill near the J. H. Grove house, Captain Key halted and looked back. He saw a body of Federal cavalry pursuing them. Quickly the twelve companies faced about and formed a battleline. The Federal cavalymen stopped their pursuit, and Key continued moving for the ford, only now at a much quicker pace. The men reached Boteler's Ford and splashed across after the cavalry rearguard.<sup>65</sup>

Shepherdstown sat on the west bank of the Potomac about three miles from the ford's Virginia exit. The 44th Georgia detachment headed there to rejoin Ripley's

Brigade. In the town, the men encountered the surgeon of the 4th Georgia who directed them to the brigade assembly area west of the town. After reuniting with the rest of the brigade, Key noticed General D. H. Hill inquiring if the 44th Georgia had crossed the river. Key testily remarked "yes, and no thanks to you." Instead of anger at this impertinent remark, Hill expressed regret at the mishap and relief that the regiment made it to safety.<sup>66</sup>

Significantly, Hill lauded Colonel Doles and Captain Key in his official battle report and mentioned Ripley very little. It is very likely that Ripley soured Hill by his performances at Mechanicsville, Gaines' Mill, Malvern Hill, and South Mountain. Ripley did little, in Hill's eyes anyway, to resurrect his reputation at Sharpsburg. In any event, Ripley did not command the brigade after his wounding for more than a few short days. He departed on detached service and Colonel Doles was nominated for a brigadier general's star to replace him.

General McClellan refused to commit the Army of the Potomac to any offensive operations south of the river during the last two weeks of September. He worked at reorganizing his army and asking for more troops before he would follow the Army of Northern Virginia. Lee, with McClellan's timidity and the Potomac River as security, moved his army around northern Virginia feeding his men, absorbing recruits, and picking up stragglers from the march into Maryland. The 44th Georgia would spend the better part of the next ten weeks marching about the countryside of Lee's home state.

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<sup>1</sup>David G. Martin, *The Second Bull Run Campaign: July-August 1862* (Conshohocken, PA: Combined Books, Inc., 1997), 28-29.



<sup>2</sup>Reese, 30 August 1862.

<sup>3</sup>Key, 3 November 1862.

<sup>4</sup>Reese, 30 August 1862.

<sup>5</sup>Harris, 27-29 August 1862.

<sup>6</sup>Key, 1 September 1898.

<sup>7</sup>Harris, 30 August-1 September 1862.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas, 570.

<sup>9</sup>Stephen W. Sears, *Landscape Turned Red: The Battle of Antietam* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1983), 49-67.

<sup>10</sup>Harris, 3-4 September 1862.

<sup>11</sup>OR, 19.1 1019.

<sup>12</sup>Harris, 5-6 September 1862.

<sup>13</sup>John Cannan, *The Antietam Campaign: August - September 1862*, rev. ed. (Conshohocken, PA: Combined Books, Inc., 1994), 62-91.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Harris, 11-13 September 1862

<sup>16</sup>Reese, 6 October 1862.

<sup>17</sup>Cannan, 62-101.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 103.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 104-105.

<sup>20</sup>John Michael Priest, *Before Antietam: The Battle for South Mountain* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Publishing Company, Inc., 1992), 174.

<sup>21</sup>Harris, 14 September 1862.

<sup>22</sup>Priest, *Before Antietam*, 177-184.

<sup>23</sup>Harris, 14 September 1862.

<sup>24</sup>Priest, *Before Antietam*, 184-187.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>26</sup>Reese, 6 October 1862.

<sup>27</sup>OR, 19.1, 1021.

<sup>28</sup>Jackson, 23 September 1862.

<sup>29</sup>OR, 19.1, , 1022.

<sup>30</sup>Key, 8 September 1898.

<sup>31</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 29, #2.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup>Key, 15 September 1898.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup>OR, 19.1, 1032-1033.

<sup>37</sup>Key, 25 September 1898.

<sup>38</sup>Curt Johnson and Richard C. Anderson Jr., *Artillery Hell: The Employment of Artillery at Antietam* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1995), 22-27.

<sup>39</sup>OR, 19.1, 1032-1033.

<sup>40</sup>R. H. Daniels, "Sharpsburg," *Confederate Veteran*, vol. 9 (Nashville, TN: May 1901; reprint, Wendell, NC: Broadfoot's Bookman, 1983), 217.

<sup>41</sup>Reese, 6 October 1862.

<sup>42</sup>OR, 19.1, 1032-1033.

<sup>43</sup>Key, 29 September 1862.

<sup>44</sup>John M. Priest, *Antietam: The Soldier's Battle* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Publishing Company, Inc., 1989), 46-47.

<sup>45</sup>Key, 15 September 1898.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>Priest, *Antietam*, 69-70.

<sup>48</sup>Key, 15 September 1898.

<sup>49</sup>Priest, *Antietam*, 76-77.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 79-80.

<sup>51</sup>OR, 19.1, 1021-1023.

<sup>52</sup>Priest, *Antietam*, 83.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 83-95.

<sup>54</sup>Key, 15 September 1898.

<sup>55</sup>OR, 19.1, 1023.

<sup>56</sup>Key, 15 September 1898.

<sup>57</sup>Key, 22 September 1898.

<sup>58</sup>Priest, *Antietam*, 328.

<sup>59</sup>Key, 15 September 1898.

<sup>60</sup>Henderson, 716-816.

<sup>61</sup>OR, 19.1, 1032-1033.

<sup>62</sup>Key, 22 September 1898.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup>Key, 13 October 1898.

<sup>65</sup>Key, 20 October 1898.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER 4

### LATE FALL OF 1862

#### Defending the Rappahannock

General McClellan refused to commit the Army of the Potomac to any offensive operations south of the river during the last two weeks of September. He worked at reorganizing his army and asking for more troops before he would follow the Army of Northern Virginia. Lee, with McClellan's timidity and the Potomac River as security, moved his army around northern Virginia feeding his men, absorbing recruits, and picking up stragglers from the march into Maryland.

The 44th Georgia spent the rest of September and early October marching about northern Virginia. From Shepherdstown the regiment moved about six miles to camp on September 19. From there to Bunker Hill the next day, and then back to Martinsburg for two days to a campsite near Opequon Creek. On September 24, the regiment shifted camp to two miles north of Martinsburg and remained there until September 27, then moved back to Bunker Hill to camp there from September 28 to October 8.<sup>1</sup>

The 44th Georgia occupied a series of camps at Bunker Hill that it would use again several times in the next two years. Commonly called "Camp Bunker Hill" the name described a group of brigade and regimental camps off the Winchester Turnpike about a mile south of the hamlet of Bunker Hill. Units habitually stayed at the same campsite on their numerous passes through the area, and favored the sites because of easy access to water and wood for campfires. The camps here also carried the tactical

advantage of being just a day's march distance from any one of a number of Potomac crossing sites. The Confederate commissary officers experienced a much more noticeable degree of success in procuring food from the countryside on this side of the Potomac. The 44th Georgia drew three days' rations of flour at a time, supplemented by fresh beef. The men made biscuits with the flour and boiled the beef. It provided a welcome change from the green apples and corn in Maryland.<sup>2</sup>

A long stay at Bunker Hill allowed the 44th Georgia to rest, recover, and absorb a few new recruits. On October 8, the regiment moved out of camp to a site nearer Winchester and stayed there until October 25. Lieutenant Colonel Lumpkin rejoined the regiment at this camp and reassumed command.<sup>3</sup> On October 16, the refreshed brigade participated in a division military review.<sup>4</sup> This review probably signaled to General D. H. Hill that his troops were again ready to take the field on campaign. A series of similar reviews throughout the Army of Northern Virginia made the same impression on General Lee.

Ripley's Brigade moved out of camp and marched to Charlestown, about seven miles west of Harpers Ferry, on October 25. Several women in the town pointed out to the passing soldiers the execution spot of abolitionist John Brown, hung two years before for a raid on Harpers Ferry. The next day the brigade assisted with tearing up track along the Baltimore and Ohio or Winchester and Potomac Railroads before marching back west of Charlestown to camp near the crossroads of Middleway. The stay there lasted until October 28 when the brigade took up a line of march for Berryville, ten miles to the southeast. The 44th Georgia stayed about the town for one night before relocating near

Berry's Ferry on the Shenandoah River for two days. On October 31, the brigade crossed the river and climbed the Blue Ridge Mountains using Ashby's Gap. The line of march led east through Paris and Upperville, then turned south for a two-day stay at Lost Mountain.<sup>5</sup>

Assistant Quartermaster William J. Neary paid the regiment while at the Lost Mountain camp on November 1. From Lost Mountain, the 44th Georgia turned back west again and spent two days about five miles east of Front Royal. The regiment recrossed the Shenandoah River on November 5 and made camp two miles west of the town for the next three days. The men forded the river since a bridge burned by Stonewall Jackson during earlier campaigning had not been rebuilt. The first snowfall of the season during the night of November 7-8 increased the hardship of soldiers marching without shoes.<sup>6</sup>

While at this camp, Colonel Doles received formal notification of approval for his commission to brigadier general. With that act, Ripley's Brigade officially became Doles' Brigade.<sup>7</sup> Other moves in the high command levels of the Army of the Potomac happened in the first week of November that would affect the 44th Georgia. On November 5, dismayed by General McClellan's inactivity and unwillingness to engage the Confederates in northern Virginia, President Lincoln relieved McClellan from command. The replacement would be General Ambrose E. Burnside, a corps commander from within the Army of the Potomac with ideas of his own about how to defeat Lee.<sup>8</sup>

On November 8, Doles' Brigade moved northeast down the Shenandoah Valley to Strasburg. All four regiments occupied themselves with destroying the Manassas Gap

Railroad from Strasburg to near Front Royal. With that task largely complete, the men settled in to a camp near Middletown for eight days, long enough to catch another heavy snowfall.<sup>9</sup> News reached Company H at Middletown that Captain John W. Butler died on a sick furlough at his Pike County home. The company voted to replace him with Lieutenant Kendrick. This continued Kendrick's quick progression from a private at the initial muster through all three lieutenant grades to captain of his company barely eight months later.<sup>10</sup>

Mid-November movements of the Army of the Potomac convinced Lee and his generals that Burnside would not use that large force against the Army of Northern Virginia in the Shenandoah Valley. Burnside envisioned a straight movement to capture Richmond commencing from around Fredericksburg on the Rappahannock River. When Lee learned of this, he planned to put his now rejuvenated army of about 55,000 squarely in the way. The next marches the 44th Georgia executed reflected his effort to relocate from the Shenandoah Valley area to south of Fredericksburg.<sup>11</sup>

Doles' Brigade moved out of camp near Middletown on November 21. The march route followed a steady direction to the southeast with overnight camps at Woodstock, New Market, Sperryville, Madison Court House and a two-day break at Gordonsville from November 26-28. Many men suffered terribly from worn or absent footwear. General Hill ordered that the rawhides from beef butchered for the soldiers be made into shoe coverings. With the leather not being cured and dried, the arrangement proved a temporary measure at best. The 44th Georgia received a supply too small to shoe all the barefooted men in this fashion, but did what it could under the circumstances.



General Hill noticed on one of the next marches a number of men without foot coverings and promptly placed Adjutant Wiley under arrest for failing to carry out the shoe order. Hill relented when Wiley stiffly explained that the regiment made shoes for as many men as the small supply of hides allotted would allow.<sup>12</sup>

### An Easy Time at Fredericksburg

Doles' Brigade continued to move toward the Rappahannock line of operations, camping at Orange Court House on November 28. The brigade passed near Fredericksburg on the Telegraph Road before turning south. After marching 11 miles below the city, the brigade camped for the night of December 1 near Guinea Station on the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad.<sup>13</sup>

From Guinea Station, the 44th Georgia and its sister regiments moved to the east to secure the area around Port Royal on the Rappahannock River for the time being. Union gunboats shelled the town on occasion, and a strong force there to prevented a Federal landing at or near the town. Colonel Estes' wound from Mechanicsville healed sufficiently to permit him to rejoin the 44th Georgia and assume command from Lieutenant Colonel Lumpkin during this time.<sup>14</sup>

Companies C, E, and G held leader elections while the regiment settled in for what appeared to be a time of stability. Private Enoch B. Spinks, twenty-five, won selection as a lieutenant in Company C. The men in Company E advanced First Sergeant Joshua Hammond, twenty-six, to the officer ranks. Both new officers remembered Mechanicsville because Spinks suffered a wound there and Hammond lost his brother

Charles to a fatal gunshot wound. Both had worked on farms before the war. Captain Huie's resignation from Company G became final while the regiment camped around Guinea Station. Huie served longer with the regiment than many men half his age. He and Lieutenant Matthews' resignation due to wounds opened two officer vacancies in Company G. The men elected Lieutenant John L. Blalock to the captain's post and advanced Lieutenant John Alexander Huie, Captain Huie's twenty-three-year-old son, to First Lieutenant.<sup>15</sup>

General Burnside began crossing the Rappahannock on December 10. By December 12, this move had placed most of the Army of the Potomac on the ground immediately around Fredericksburg. Skirmishing and diversionary attacks filled up December 12. Lee became convinced that the main Union effort would be made around the town and not at Port Royal. In the afternoon, orders went out to concentrate the troops around Fredericksburg. The week before, Doles' Brigade had endured a few false alarms while camped in the area around Port Royal. The last one occurred very early on December 12. Rising at 4 A.M., the brigade marched three or four miles to Port Royal, only to backtrack to camp. The men fell out into camp, but the call came at around 4 P.M. that afternoon to quickly fall into line. The brigade took up a line of march north to Fredericksburg. The rapid march stretched past dark and all through the night, the men making about eighteen miles at night.<sup>16</sup> The regiment finally halted after 3 A.M.<sup>17</sup>

This forced march brought up forces to the main Confederate position on the low hills west of the town of Fredericksburg. When Doles' Brigade reached its position in a wooded area near Hamilton's Crossing on the railroad south of the city, the exhausted

troops fell out in a wooded area and promptly fell asleep. The break lasted little more than two hours. Early in the morning, Doles' moved the men into their place in a line of battle of Jackson's Corps on the extreme right of the Confederate line. The brigade assumed a reserve position behind a hill west of Hamilton's Crossing between Mine Road and Massaponax Creek. The men clearly heard sounds of battle to the north from the vicinity of Fredericksburg. Occasionally, a shell crashed through the trees.<sup>18</sup>

Before midday, shouted orders directed the men to stand and fall into line. The brigade battle line moved forward through a field and apple orchard and halted before a wooded thicket. To their front, Union troops under command of General Meade had broken into some of the Confederate lines overlooking the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad south of the city. Counterattacks drove Meade back and sealed off the break. The movements by Doles' Brigade supported these counterattacks, but the brigade did not come into direct contact with a Federal force. D. H. Hill arrived and personally led Doles' and other brigades forward through the woods. As the line moved slowly through the woods, men began to fall from artillery fire. Case shot burst intermittently over the formations. The thick woods held down casualties in the 44th Georgia, but the other regiments advanced through more open terrain and suffered considerably more than the 44th.<sup>19</sup> The 44th Georgia reported casualties of one killed and six wounded.<sup>20</sup>

The next day the 44th Georgia lay in a battleline under cover of some trees and endured artillery fire from Union batteries posted across the Rappahannock River. The Federal gunners exploded a shell in the midst of Company I. The blast horribly mangled

Private Benjamin F. "Jack" Carroll, killing him instantly, and wounded Private Josiah M. James so seriously that he died from the effects three weeks later.<sup>21</sup> The men grew up before the war on Henry County households just a few hundred yards from each other.<sup>22</sup>

With Meade repulsed and the major Federal effort against the entrenched Confederates west of Fredericksburg on Marye's Heights a total failure, the fighting died out as darkness approached. The 44th Georgia moved up into the front battleline for the night of December 13 to relieve units worn out from the day's fighting. On December 14, Doles' Brigade detailed two companies to move to the vicinity of Marye's Heights and assist with digging more earthworks. Perhaps by coincidence, the two companies, Company G of the 4th Georgia and Company B from the 44th Georgia, came from Jasper county. The men worked throughout the night and apparently dug very well, causing the commander of the detachment to comment that he was "satisfied that the Federals would never tackle a place fortified by two Jasper County companies."<sup>23</sup>

The men passed the night of December 14 quietly sleeping in a line of battle behind the woodline. Captain Jackson formerly of Company C, 44th Georgia and now working as a commissary officer for the regiment, went searching for the unit to deliver a load of cooked rations. He found the regiment in a supporting line with the men slumbering in the woods 150 yards behind the main line. The position occupied terrain so close to the Federal lines that no fires were permitted. Captain Jackson delivered the food and returned to the regimental camp to oversee the cooking of the next day's rations.<sup>24</sup>

Burnside withdrew the Army of the Potomac back across the Rappahannock River during December 15. Confederate scouts confirmed this fact the next day. Lee sent the various parts of the Army of Northern Virginia back into camps west and south of Fredericksburg to watch the area along the Rapidan and Rappahannock Rivers in case threats surfaced along those points. On December 16, the 44th Georgia and Doles' Brigade marched south about five miles toward Port Royal before camping.<sup>25</sup> The regiment began the monotonous but necessary tasks of outpost, picket, and fortification detail duties and settled into this routine as the year of 1862 came to an end.

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<sup>1</sup>Key, 3 November 1898.

<sup>2</sup>Jackson, 30 September 1898.

<sup>3</sup>Key, 3 November 1898.

<sup>4</sup>Harris, 8 October 1861.

<sup>5</sup>Key, 3 November 1898.

<sup>6</sup>Harris, 1-8 November 1862.

<sup>7</sup>Key, 3 November 1898.

<sup>8</sup>Cannan, 218.

<sup>9</sup>Key, 3 November 1898.

<sup>10</sup>Henderson, 812-813.

<sup>11</sup>Jay Luvas and Harold W. Nelson, ed. *U.S. Army War College Guide to the Battles of Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg* (Carlisle, PA: South Mountain Press, 1988; reprint, New York: Harper & Row, 1989), ix-x.

<sup>12</sup>Thomas, 471.

<sup>13</sup>Harris, 1 December 1862.

<sup>14</sup>Key, 10 November 1898.

<sup>15</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>16</sup>Harris, 12 December 1862.

<sup>17</sup>Jackson, 15 December 1862.

<sup>18</sup>Harris, 13 December 1862.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Key, 10 November 1862.

<sup>21</sup>Harris, 14 December 1862.

<sup>22</sup>*1860 Census.*

<sup>23</sup>Key, 10 November 1862.

<sup>24</sup>Jackson, 15 December 1862.

<sup>25</sup>Harris, 16 December 1862

## PART II: 1863--MARCHES AND VICTORIES

### CHAPTER 5

#### FIGHTING BEHIND STONEWALL

##### Culling the Regiment Top to Bottom

January 1, 1863, brought with it the new year. For the men in the 44th Georgia Infantry, 1863 promised hope for three ways of ending the Civil War. First, most men assumed that the South could force a favorable solution on the battlefield that would let slavery survive as an institution and allow states a large measure of self-determination. Second, there remained hope for intervention from England and France in this exclusively American war to ensure the uninterrupted flow of cotton to mills in Europe. Third, many felt that after another defeat on the scale of Fredericksburg, the Federals would decide it was not worth the slaughter necessary to subdue the South. Of these hopes, the rank and file of the 44th Georgia could materially affect the first and third ones. Despite the serious losses at Mechanicsville, Malvern Hill, and Sharpsburg, the 44th resolved as a regiment to continue the fight. Up to this point in the war, no 44th Georgia soldier had "voted with his feet" by deserting the unit.<sup>1</sup>

The third week of January brought a profound change to Doles' Brigade. Brigades with regiments from two, and sometimes three, states were common in the Army of Northern Virginia. President Davis strongly preferred brigades configured with regiments from the same state, a thought that he imposed on General Lee.<sup>2</sup> The 1st and 3rd North Carolina left Doles' Brigade on January 19 and, in exchange, Doles received

the 12th and 21st Georgia regiments from Hoke's Brigade. This transfer solidified the structure of Doles' Brigade until the end of the war. Both the 12th and 21st Georgia Infantry regiments dated their service from 1861 and carried solid battlefield reputations. The regiments had fought at Sharpsburg in Trimble's Brigade forward of the Mumma Farm. Ripley's Brigade, with the 4th and 44th Georgia, supported their line for a time early on September 17.<sup>3</sup>

Family ties continued to play an important role in holding the men together as a regiment. Over the course of the winter months, soldiers returned home to Georgia on furlough. Those going home from Virginia by railroad to most of the 44th Georgia source counties usually traveled the Georgia Railroad connecting Augusta and Atlanta. Women in Union Point operated the "Wayside," a stopover for traveling soldiers to rest, eat, and perhaps stay the night. A soldier could get assistance merely by signing his name to a ledger book and listing his unit.<sup>4</sup> Approximately 120 44th Georgia soldiers signed their names during the winter months of 1863. Many of them went home to recover from illness or wounds, and their names are often recorded on the return trip back to Virginia to rejoin the regiment.<sup>5</sup> The returning soldiers frequently brought back packages of food and clothing and strong messages of support for family and friends in the regiment. Significantly, no soldier in the regiment who visited Georgia during the first winter period failed to return.<sup>6</sup>

Worship services occupied a significant role in the 44th Georgia Infantry camp life around Guinea Station. Soldiers attended regularly scheduled services in each regiment of Doles' Brigade. The regimental chaplains in the brigade often rotated



preaching multiple sermons on Sundays. One 44th soldier wrote that he “went to preaching in the 21st Georgia at 9 A.M., at 11 A.M. in the 12th [Georgia] and at 3 [p.m.] in ours. Ate supper and had prayer meeting at night.” Messages in the sermons reinforced the idea that the Southern cause had at least the understanding if not the outright approval of the Almighty. Religion played a powerful, pervasive role in everyday life in the 44th Georgia counties, making this message extremely effective. A soldier in the regiment “came to the conclusion that God will certainly hear and grant us our petitions.”<sup>7</sup>

Leadership influence would be absolutely critical to holding the regiment together as a cohesive unit during the uncertainty of upcoming campaigns. Of the ten original company captains, only Captains Key (B) and Beck (K) continued to serve in that capacity with the arrival of 1863. However, the remaining company captains had battlefield experience that earned the respect and trust of the men that they led. Captains Credille (A), Haygood (C), Hanes (D), Connally (E), and Harris (I) had led their companies since shortly after the Seven Days. Captain Greene (F) took over after Sharpsburg and only Blalock (G) and Kendrick (H) were relatively new as captains of their respective companies. Even so, these men had served with their companies since the original musters. Across the front rank, the 44th Georgia enjoyed company leadership that was trusted, proven, and relatively stable.<sup>8</sup>

The company captains needed the support of leaders recently elected to fill vacancies in the officer ranks. The resignation of Lieutenant William T. McDowell in Company B in early February allowed election of Second Sergeant Emory M. Maddux to

Junior Second Lieutenant. Maddux, twenty-six, worked on a farm before the war and his brother John briefly served in the regiment before a discharge in July 1862.<sup>9</sup>

President Lincoln forced some leadership changes of his own with the senior leadership of the Army of the Potomac. On January 25, Lincoln relieved General Burnside and replaced him with General Joseph Hooker, commander of the Federal I Corps at Sharpsburg. The catalyst of the relief action seemed to be the infamous "Mud March" in mid-January. Burnside tried a quick march around Lee's left above Fredericksburg, but torrential rain muddied the roads and killed the movement. About the only thing the march accomplished was to keep Lee attuned to any threat on his left along the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers. Once he divined a threat in that area, he could quickly shift any number of spirited, confident divisions to meet the emergency.<sup>10</sup>

One incident in particular illustrated the cohesion and elan of the 44th Georgia and Doles' Brigade during the winter months of early 1863. The heaviest of eight snows that year struck the camp during the night of February 21-22. The regiment set out at 10 A.M. in the morning to take over the outer picket guard about three miles from camp, shivered all day, and then returned. Other regiments challenged them to a snowball fight that evening as they returned, but it did not commence until the next day except for some "skirmishing" with small parties attacking each other's camps.<sup>11</sup>

The brigade leadership posted scout to warn of any attacks on the camp, and they soon detected Colquitt's Brigade of Georgians advancing in a line of battle armed with snowballs. Drummers beat the long-roll on the drums to alert Doles' Brigade and form them into line. Snowballs sailed through the air. The 27th Georgia tried a left flank

movement which the 12th Georgia blunted. The 4th Georgia blocked a similar movement on the right by the 6th Georgia. In the center the 21st and 44th Georgia faced off against the 19th and 28th Georgia and broke the center of Colquitt's Brigade and drove them from the field. The yelling soldiers pursued Colquitt's vanquished men into their camp and even captured the Chaplain of the 6th Georgia. Releasing the Chaplain on his honor, the men returned to camp having won their first "fight" as a brigade.<sup>12</sup>

The Army of Northern Virginia began to put itself on a campaign footing in early April. The warming weather indicated the threat of Union offensive moves in the spring months around Fredericksburg. Confederate leaders felt Hooker would certainly cross the Rappahannock to give battle, but no one knew exactly where or when. General Hooker indeed had a plan for fighting the Army of Northern Virginia beyond Lee's left flank. The concept called for an operation in late April or early May putting most of the Army of the Potomac with Hooker in control across the Rapidan. A corps in Lee's front would attack Fredericksburg to divert Lee's attention and tie down troops he could shift to his left. When Lee did learn of the danger, he would be attacked by the flanking force and the troops in Fredericksburg and crushed between them. The plan seemed sound and, with a certain degree of surprise, promising of success.<sup>13</sup>

Several leaders in the 44th Georgia doubted their ability to soldier through another campaign season and tendered their resignations. Lieutenant Thomas J. Edmondson resigned in Company G, citing that his wounds suffered at Sharpsburg prevented him from serving any longer. His younger brother Joseph, twenty, replaced him in the officer ranks. Captain Kendrick of Company H resigned his position April 29.

The forty-three-year-old Kendrick began the war as a private serving with his son and three relatives. He ended his short military service after suffering through the death of his son at Camp Stephens and a wound plus the deaths of two more Kendricks during the Seven Days. First Lieutenant Butler moved up to take his place.<sup>14</sup>

On April 27, Hooker started the corps of Generals Howard, Slocum, and Meade on the wide march around Lee's left flank. The Federals pushed hard and succeeded in getting most of the army started before Lee becomes aware of the scope of the plan. By the evening of April 29, elements of all three corps camped south of the Rapidan in an area locally known as the Wilderness. General Sedgwick's VI Corps and General Reynolds' I Corps had also crossed the Rappahannock downstream from Fredericksburg. These two river crossings signaled the end of winter months spent in camp and the start of the 44th Georgia Infantry's second year of war.<sup>15</sup>

### An Irresistible Tide of Gray

The 44th Georgia responded to Sedgwick's VI Corps crossing of the Rappahannock on Wednesday, April 29. The regiment fell in with the rest of Doles' Brigade and rapidly marched up to positions it occupied during the Fredericksburg battle. The men slept that night in a reserve position. The next day the brigade moved to a trenchline south of the railroad at Hamilton's Crossing. The previous defenders had not done a suitable job on the trench, so the men spent all day digging it deeper and wider. Despite a few months of inactivity, the regimental rank and file felt very confident of defeating any Federal attack from Fredericksburg.<sup>16</sup>

Unknown to the average soldier in the 44th Georgia, Lee quickly discovered the threat to his left flank and formulated a plan against it. He pushed forces out from Fredericksburg along the Plank Road with the mission of stopping the Federal advance before it could traverse the Wilderness. In the meantime, Lee designated troops from the Fredericksburg fortifications to turn around and march west.<sup>17</sup>

The Rapidan River flows into the Rappahannock about ten miles upstream from Fredericksburg. South of the Rapidan-Rappahannock junction lay the Wilderness, a thick, second-growth forest of scrub oak and pine with dense undergrowth. Clearings occurred around the widely scattered small farms, but seldom anywhere else. Streams and ravines cut the dense undergrowth. The few roads assumed vital importance because a force operating in the thick parts of the Wilderness found itself virtually road-bound.<sup>18</sup>

Roads traversing the Wilderness played a key role in determining where the 44th Georgia would fight its next battle. The Old Turnpike traveled east from Orange Court House through the Wilderness and on to Fredericksburg. The Plank Road roughly paralleled the Old Turnpike on a course about three to four miles south before intersecting it near Wilderness Church. Near this spot the Brook Road joined the Turnpike and Plank Road to make one of the region's most militarily significant road junctions. From Wilderness Church, the Plank Road ran with the Old Turnpike for about two miles before running south again from the Chancellorsville crossroads. If any road junction outranked the one near Wilderness Church, this one with five roads joining together did so. Three of the roads ran from fords Hooker had used to cross the Rapidan behind Lee. The Turnpike and Old Plank Road were the two all-weather roads that

constituted the main routes east out of the Wilderness for Hooker. He needed control of them to move quickly on Lee's flank and get out on more open terrain where he could bring the numerical advantage of the Army of the Potomac to bear. But Lee's scouts alerted him in time to turn his forces around, and the two roads also provided primary avenues of approach Lee intended using to get at Hooker.<sup>19</sup>

Doles' Brigade moved out with a new division commander about 3 A.M. on May 1.<sup>20</sup> With D. H. Hill on detached duty in North Carolina, his old division marched under the command of General Robert E. Rodes. The brigade made fairly good time by way of Mine Road, turned onto the Plank Road to Tabernacle Church, and ran up behind the divisions attacking Hooker's advance columns along the Plank Road about 1 P.M.<sup>21</sup> The 44th Georgia formed on the right of a brigade battleline north of the Plank Road and threw out skirmishers. A minor brush with Federal skirmishers produced six blue-clad prisoners and a wounded Captain Key. A Federal skirmisher hit him with a bullet at long range that knocked the breath out of him and kept him feeling winded for several hours. Doles soon recalled the brigade back to the Plank Road and the division advanced west again.<sup>22</sup>

Just before dark on May 1, Lee and Jackson met in a clearing beside the Plank Road. With Hooker now stalled, the army commander proposed sending Jackson's Corps of about 28,000 men around the Union right flank while he remained with 15,000 keeping the Federals fixed in place along the Plank Road. Rodes' Division with the 44th Georgia would be in the lead elements of the flanking movement.<sup>23</sup> Rodes' Division slept the night of May 1 in an old cleared field south of the Plank road. The bivouac location

for the 44th Georgia lay between the Alrich and Perry homesteads.<sup>24</sup> The tired men just lay down beside their rifles for the night to get what sleep they could.<sup>25</sup>

Awaking before sunrise to a cool and crisp dawn, the men stretched and filed out into the Plank Road. The 12th Georgia led the brigade, followed by the 21st, 44th, and 4th regiments.<sup>26</sup> The now famous Flank March began in a northerly direction toward the Chancellorsville crossroads. After about a mile, the route bent in a left turn to pick up the Furnace Road, named for an old iron furnace located on it which the 44th Georgia soon passed. At the furnace, the march angled south and then southwest as Jackson curved steadily around beyond surveillance of the Union center and right flank. He roved about the marching columns at times encouraging the men to close up and keep their intervals.<sup>27</sup> Rodes' Division passed the point where the Furnace Road intersected with the Brock Road during the late morning hours. The column turned south here and double-backed on itself to gain the Brock Road. The men marched on along the Brock Road until it passed through an intersection with the Plank Road. The very warm weather tired the men, and the still winded Captain Key borrowed Colonel Estes' horse to stay with the regiment.<sup>28</sup>

Jackson expected to attack along the Plank Road, but he discovered the Union flank extended more to the west along the Old Turnpike. He passed instructions to Rodes' lead brigade to keep moving up the Brock Road and reach the Old Turnpike. Rodes turned his troops southeast down the Old Turnpike before moving them off the road and into a division battleline in preparation for the attack. The brigade lines stretched into the undergrowth for over a mile perpendicular to the Old Turnpike on the

north and south sides.<sup>29</sup> By 4 P.M. Jackson had accomplished his mission when he and 28,000 troops formed on the Union right flank virtually undetected.

The Union soldiers soon to receive a devastating attack constituted the Eleventh Corps under General O. O. Howard. After leaving camps near Fredericksburg on April 27, the Eleventh Corps marched in a long circuitous route and crossed the Rapidan at Germanna Ford on April 29. Once on the south side of the Rapidan, Howard moved southeast to pick up the Old Turnpike, then further to the east to his current position around Wilderness Church and Dowdall's Tavern.<sup>30</sup>

General Howard aligned the Eleventh Corps with his three divisions generally facing south along the Old Turnpike/Plank Road. The First Division, commanded by General Charles Devens, occupied the extreme right flank of the entire Army of the Potomac. Devens posted his brigades from west to east as First Brigade, then Second Brigade. Colonel Leopold von Gilsa commanded the 1,400 soldier First Brigade, and General McLean commanded the Second Brigade.<sup>31</sup>

Von Gilsa's First Brigade had no friendly forces to his west and he aligned his brigade with that in mind. He put the 41st and 45th New York regiments facing south along the Turnpike digging some trenches by the road. He refused his right by posting the 153rd Pennsylvania and 54th New York at a right angle to the Plank Road. These two regiments also put up some light fieldworks facing west. A two-gun section from the 13th Battery, New York Light Artillery, commanded by Captain Julius Dieckmann, took up a westward facing position in the road.<sup>32</sup> Dieckmann's other four guns went into battery just west of the Talley farm where Devens put his headquarters.<sup>33</sup>



General McLean arrayed the 2nd Brigade along the Plank Road facing south with four regiments in line, from west to east being the 55th, 107th, and 75th Ohio and 17th Connecticut regiments. The 25th Ohio occupied a reserve position back across the Plank Road. Battery I, 1st Ohio Light Artillery, commanded by Captain Hubert Dilger, supported this line from near the intersection of the Plank and Old Turnpike roads.<sup>34</sup>

As the soldiers of the Eleventh Corps scooped out shallow trenches, cooked meals, and rested late in the afternoon, Jackson put the finishing touches on his assault lines. He put Rodes' Division on the front to lead the attack. Rodes put Doles' Brigade immediately south of the Old Turnpike. Doles aligned his brigade with the 4th Georgia on the left as the unit of direction using the road as a guide. The 44th Georgia would advance using the 4th Georgia as a guide. The 21st and 12th Georgia would move on the 44th Georgia's right flank. The regiments went into line, put out skirmishers to the front, and awaited the order to advance.<sup>35</sup>

Jackson clearly outlined his intent to his division and brigade commanders as the battlelines formed in the woods. He insisted that the assault regiments guide on the Old Turnpike. He put the first objective as the higher ground near the Talley farm, about one mile from the start point, because the ground there seemed to command other terrain to the east. He strongly emphasized over and over that units should not pause during the advance for any reason.<sup>36</sup> At approximately 5:15 P.M., Rodes finished checking the alignment of his brigades and halted his horse near Jackson's. Stonewall asked Rodes if he was ready and Rodes answered in the affirmative. Jackson's reply, "You can go forward, then." unleashed the most stunning attack in Virginia of the Civil War.<sup>37</sup>

### Chancellorsville--The Flank Attack

Arguably the most devastating attack by the Army of Northern Virginia in the Civil War began slowly for the 44th Georgia Infantry. The regiment received the order to advance, then abruptly halted in a marshy area around a branch of Lewis Creek for several minutes. One of the company commanders sat on a large root next to a water moccasin. He promptly killed it with his sword. Lieutenant Colonel Lumpkin almost immediately killed another. This twin killing amused many of the men who took it as an omen of success. Very soon after that some stray case shot whistled overhead and the battleline moved out at a rapid pace. The road curved slightly southward where the battleline caught up with the skirmishers. The curve forced the 44th Georgia to its right where a portion of it intermingled with the left of the 21st Georgia. Colonel Mercer of the 21st Georgia obliqued his troops to the right to clear the battlelines, a move accomplished as canister and rifle bullets whizzed by the regiments in thicker and thicker quantities.<sup>38</sup>

The regiments burst out of the dense thickets into a clearing about 400 yards from the bend in von Gilsa's line manned by the 41st and 45th New York regiments. Those two units fled east without firing a shot at the advancing Georgians. Dieckmann's gunners saw Doles' line and got off four rounds that sawed into the charging front ranks,<sup>39</sup> killing Captain Green advancing at the head of Company F.<sup>40</sup>

The 44th Georgia stopped briefly and fired one volley at the two guns, knocking down some of the cannoneers. The 21st Georgia's battleline moved to flank the guns as

the 4th and 44th attacked head-on. The guns sat in the road and the gunners abandoned the two guns with their caissons and limbers as the line swept over them.<sup>41</sup> Most of the gun crews fled east with the majority of von Gilsa's First Brigade. After a brief pause in the melee past the two guns, the 4th and 44th Georgia continued to roll up the entrenchments beside the Turnpike by assaulting Federal regiments on their right flank. The 44th Georgia by now had crossed the Old Turnpike and continued on to the east with its sister regiments for about 400 yards before slamming into the Second Brigade.<sup>42</sup>

Doles' men engaged each Union regiment from McLean's Second Brigade in turn and prevented a coherent defense from forming. The 55th and 25th Ohio provided the first victims. The 55th's regimental commander, Colonel John C. Lee, later reported that a storm of artillery and rifle fire swept his men out of fieldworks beside the road. The closeness to the roadway strongly implicated the 4th and 44th Georgia as the infantry catalysts for this movement. Colonel Lee struggled to rally his disorganized men behind the 25th Ohio. The fact that McLean and Devens are both wounded complicated this already difficult task since the command of the brigade passed to him.<sup>43</sup>

The 25th Ohio's commander tried to wheel his men back at right angles with his left resting on the Old Turnpike to engage the advancing Georgians. Before this maneuver could be completed, Doles' men closed to within 200 paces of the regiment yelling, firing, and driving escaping Federal troops before them. The close location, approximately 200 yards or less, to the road again strongly indicates that the 4th and 44th Georgia attacked this position in flank while the 21st went to attack the changing Federal front. The 25th fired no more than five or six shots per man in a few moments before

rapidly withdrawing and leaving over 130 killed and wounded on the ground.<sup>44</sup> This quick rearward movement swept the 55th Ohio along before that regiment could form again.<sup>45</sup>

The 75th Ohio suffered a similar fate, firing only three rounds before leaving the protection of their trenches along the road and moving to the rear.<sup>46</sup> The 107th Ohio also manned some shallow trenches around the Talley house, putting them squarely in the path of the advance. The men witnessed the flight along the road behind them before Doles' line came into view. The regiment fired barely five rounds before being swept along before Rodes' Division. Here the proximity to the Old Turnpike points to the 12th and 44th Georgia as the primary culprits in breaking the 75th and 107th Ohio.<sup>47</sup>

The 17th Connecticut of the Second Brigade retired in some semblance of order before the gray tide and moved hurriedly to a line frantically being established near Dowdall's Tavern. The 12th and 44th Georgia shared inflicting over 120 casualties on the regiment as it withdrew.<sup>48</sup> In just a few minutes this completed the expulsion of McLean's men from prepared positions south of the Old Turnpike and with it, the routing of Devens' entire division.

The Confederate advance secured the higher ground around the Talley house, but much more work remained to be done. Ahead lay the intersection of the Old Turnpike and Plank Roads with Union officers desperately trying to form a line to stall the attack's momentum. The XI Corps' Third Division, Third Brigade under General Alexander Schimmelfennig strung together the 82nd Illinois and 157th New York in a rough southward facing line west of Wilderness Church on the Hawkins farm property.<sup>49</sup>

The 44th Georgia and Doles' Brigade hurried through some thick scrub pine and then broke out into a clearing north of the intersection of the Old Turnpike and Plank Roads containing Dowdall's Tavern on the south side of the road and the Wilderness Church in a grove of trees across the road to the north. It also brought the advancing line under fire from Captain Dilger's Battery I, 1st Ohio Light Artillery at close range. The battery had six guns that supported Schimmelfennig's attempt to stop Doles in the open ground west of Wilderness Church. Dilger's gunners let fly with spherical case shot and then canister at the oncoming gray line, momentarily slowing it.<sup>50</sup> These blasts mortally wounded two men in Company B, 44th Georgia, maimed at least three others for the rest of their lives, and caused many other casualties throughout the regiment. Regimental Adjutant Addison Burnside fell with a fatal gunshot wound in the head while attacking this line. He lingered in a delirium for hours, still urging "forward men, guide center."<sup>51</sup> Undeterred, the men in gray kept coming on, shooting down some of the battery horses, and yelling at the top of their lungs. The eerie, shrill sound moved a gunner of Dilger's to write later to his parents "such a yelling I never heard before as the Rebs made." Dilger himself could see the Confederate line would soon flank his position and he sent five of his six guns to the rear.<sup>52</sup>

Doles' advance steadily pushed the 82nd Illinois backwards. The regiment got off barely ten rounds per man as it moved out of successively threatened positions. The Georgians followed closely, having inflicted over 150 casualties on the 82nd Illinois and nearly 100 on the 157th New York<sup>53</sup> and chasing them east past Wilderness Church.<sup>54</sup> The third established position Rodes' Division assaulted consisted of a line hurriedly

pieced together by Colonel Buschbeck, commanding the First Brigade, Second Division. The line checked the slowing Confederate advance slightly before it, too, was flanked on the north end and pushed from the field.<sup>55</sup>

Jackson's massive attack now began to reach a culminating point after 7 P.M. Darkness was coming on quickly. The troops were near the end of their endurance, having marched for most of the day and moved at the double-quick for over the last hour. Several men had tarried to plunder the Federal camps or pick up discarded gear littering the field. All the regiments on the front line suffered considerable casualties, the 44th Georgia's leadership especially so. Regiments in the brigades had lost contact with each other or had become hopelessly intermixed as did an element of 200 men from the 4th and 44th Georgia.<sup>56</sup> It seemed that pure momentum and understanding Jackson's intent kept carrying the attack forward. In the words of a 44th Georgia soldier "our watchword was 'onward' and onward we went."<sup>57</sup>

The 200-man detachment of the 4th and 44th Georgia closed to within 300 yards of another Federal position before a storm of rifle and cannon fire drove them to ground. The men sought cover behind a rail fence, exhausted their remaining ammunition, and waited until darkness to and search for their parent regiments.<sup>58</sup> Other elements of the 44th Georgia attacked this line, but without much result.

The largest part of Doles' Brigade continued to move slowly east along the Plank Road until nearly even with an old country schoolhouse. In the fields and woods near this spot, the 44th Georgia leaders tried to collect and organize the men still standing. A soldier on the 44th Georgia regimental staff stated that he recognized only one man

around him. It took him a couple of hours in the deepening darkness and confusion to relocate the regiment. When he did find it, the survivors bear hugged him because they had assumed him to be killed.<sup>59</sup>

General Doles withdrew the elements of his brigade westward long the Plank Road about 500 yards to escape some intense Federal cannon fire, and the 44th Georgia replenished its ammunition supply in the darkness. That done, the men lay down exhausted in an old field south of Dowdall's Tavern, the site of very heavy fighting just a couple of hours before.<sup>60</sup> First Sergeant Richard W. Freeman of Company E could not sleep and walked the battlefield near his company. At midnight, he found two grievously wounded Federal soldiers lying side by side. He offered to help them and the two astonished men asked him for water. Freeman found two dead soldiers nearby and took the canteens of water from the bodies back to the wounded men. He also picked up two discarded rifles and rigged a cloth covering over the two grateful men to protect them from the heavy dew. Freeman returned to his unit and after sunrise returned to check on them. The two wounded men had died during the night.<sup>61</sup>

### Souring the Fruits of Success

On May 3, Lee focused his Army of Northern Virginia on attacking through the Union position, now drawn up like a horseshoe with the open end to the north and the center roughly a quarter of a mile west of the Chancellorsville crossroads. He would have to do it without the services of Stonewall Jackson, mortally wounded by his own

troops the night before. General J. E. B. Stuart, formerly commanding the cavalry corps, now commanded the wing containing the 44th Georgia.<sup>62</sup>

The 44th Georgia had suffered about 100 casualties during May 2. Two company commanders had gone down. Captain Greene of Company F died during the start of the flanking attack, probably during the same phase that Company A's Captain Credille suffered a horrible wound in the arm. Surgeons amputated Credille's arm at a field hospital, but he died on May 4. First Lieutenant J. B. Reese took over as captain for Company F, as did First Lieutenant McKenzie for Company A. Private David A. Lawrence, twenty-four, a prosperous farmer before the war, moved up into the officer ranks in Company F. Private Sanford R. Moore, twenty-eight, who already had had two brothers serve and one of them die in Company F, advanced to the officer ranks in Company A.<sup>63</sup>

With so much of the regiment related by blood, some of the blood spilt on May 2 affected families in numerous ways. Thomas Moseley and his younger brother William in Company C both suffered wounds in the first day's fighting. Their family in Clarke County underwent some anxious moments until the boys could be located in a hospital, and word passed from surgeons that their prospects for recovery looked promising. Both eventually recovered and went on to soldier again in the 44th Georgia until Thomas' death in 1864 and William's capture sometime that year.<sup>64</sup>

In their bivouac in a field south of the Plank Road and Dowdall's Tavern, the 44th Georgia men stirred around 5 A.M. The surviving officers formed the men into a brigade battleline facing east with the 44th Georgia on the left connecting with Ramseur's



Brigade. The rest of the brigade formed on the 44th Georgia's right with the 21st, 12th, and 4th regiments in line.<sup>65</sup> Rodes' Division formed the third offensive line for the advance that morning with Doles' Brigade on the right center.<sup>66</sup> The men rested in line, ate something if they had anything with them, and awaited events.

Shortly before 8 A.M. Rodes' line advanced. Shuffling of the brigade front changed the alignment to the 12th, 4th, 21st, and 44th from north to south.<sup>67</sup> Due to the nature of the thick, wooded terrain and intermittent tracts of swamp, Doles' Brigade broke into two parts. The 44th Georgia continued on with the right flank part under the control of Colonel Mercer of the 21st Georgia, even though just half of the 21st moved with the right flank portion. After a few delays, General Stuart directed Mercer to support a battery of artillery in engaging the Federal line.<sup>68</sup>

The battery, the exact identity unknown, moved into a spot vacated by the 44th Georgia in the line, unlimbered, and began firing. The action drew the response of Federal artillery concentrated south of the Chancellorsville crossroads. The 44th Georgia moved to the right through some of the thickest terrain in an area known for difficult going to avoid most of the return fire. The disjointed line faced generally north and advanced through thick woods before coming to a clearing crisscrossed by Federal fieldworks. Colonel Winn of the 4th Georgia could see at least two Federal batteries with strong infantry support near a "brick house."<sup>69</sup> His description of the brick house puts the 44th, 4th and part of the 21st Georgia in the main Chancellorsville clearing for this fight.<sup>70</sup>

Colonel Mercer ordered the men forward. As they left the woodline, Federal cannon fire caught the 44th Georgia and its comrades in crossfire of shells and canister from the left and front.<sup>71</sup> Although few men dropped from this fire, the effect of all the metal in the air convinced the men to quickly seek cover.

Sergeant George W. Beavers carried the regimental colors of the 44th Georgia during this action. Colonel Estes ordered Beavers to take the flag and head toward a chimney to guide the regiment. Beavers set out through a storm of flying shells and singing bullets. The storm of fire caused the attacking line to oblique to the right for the cover of another woodline.<sup>72</sup> After a distance, Beavers glanced behind to find himself advancing alone. He turned and ran for his life.<sup>73</sup>

Before Beavers could regain the woodline, he passed over Colonel Estes stretched prone in the tall grass and asked him the position of the 44th Georgia. Estes directed Beavers to the nearby woodline. Before Beavers reached it, a Federal bullet found him. The slug entered his shoulder, ranged downward through his back, and knocked him unconscious. When he came to, he crawled into a nearby rifle pit and thought it would be a suitable place to die,<sup>74</sup> but the tough Beavers lived to return to the regiment after a long recuperation, survived the war, and eventually passed away in 1920.<sup>75</sup>

The curtain of fire that initially turned and then wounded Beavers kept the 44th Georgia in the treeline for a period of time before Colonel Mercer moved his force to the shelter of a ravine.<sup>76</sup> The men used this time to rest, fill their canteens from a nearby spring, and draw and prepared rations that had been brought forward. The men brewed

plenty of coffee and sugar scrounged from discarded Federal knapsacks before moving out to find the remainder of the brigade.<sup>77</sup>

Other Confederate attacks on the Union position around the crossroads forced the bluecoats to displace northward to another one defending the fords and bridge sites across the Rappahannock River. By late afternoon, the 44th Georgia located the rest of Doles' Brigade and Rodes' Division along the Plank Road. The 44th took up a position on the extreme left of the division and directly along the Plank Road right of way.<sup>78</sup> The soldiers piled logs and additional dirt along the road embankment to make a formidable field fortification in a very short time.<sup>79</sup>

#### Chancellorsville: The Cost of the Crossroads

With only minor adjustments, Doles' Brigade remained along the Plank Road behind pickets and strong fieldworks throughout May 4 and 5. During the stormy night of May 5, Hooker pulled the Army of the Potomac back across the Rapidan and Rappahannock, for the time being ending contention for the roads and clearings around Chancellorsville and the Wilderness. The Federal forces still remained active around Fredericksburg; however, and now Lee shifted more of his troops to the east.

The 44th Georgia received orders to march to the recently vacated camps near Fredericksburg and departed field camps west of the Chancellorsville crossroads and began marching toward Fredericksburg late on the afternoon of May 6. The column filed in the rain past the darkened chimneys of the Chancellor home at the crossroads which burned during the fighting of May 3.<sup>80</sup> Many of the army field trains and cavalry went

ahead of the infantry on the rain-soaked roads, creating mud in some places from ankle to knee deep. Many of the officers commented that this night march in the rain on muddy roads constituted the 44th Georgia's hardest march of the war.<sup>81</sup>

By the time the leading elements of the regiment closed on the camps south of Fredericksburg, Doles could not count the 44th Georgia ready for another fight in the immediate future. The approximately 600-strong regiment reported 10 killed, 108 wounded, and five missing during the fighting around Chancellorsville, including several key leaders.<sup>82</sup> The badly disorganized regiment marched in small fragments along the dismal, muddy roads to Fredericksburg with men straggling into camp throughout May 7 and the day after.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>2</sup>Douglass Southall Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, vol. 1, *Manassas to Malvern Hill* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), 270.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas, 1.

<sup>4</sup>Rice, 417.

<sup>5</sup>Union Point (Georgia) *Wayside Register Book*, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>6</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>7</sup>Jackson, 29 March 1863.

<sup>8</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 740.

<sup>10</sup>Luvass and Nelson, 119.

<sup>11</sup>Reese, 7 April 1863.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Luvas and Nelson, 123-139.

<sup>14</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>15</sup>Ernest B. Furgurson, *Chancellorsville 1863: The Souls of the Brave* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1992), 94-97.

<sup>16</sup>Harris, 29-30 April 1863.

<sup>17</sup>Luvas and Nelson, 156.

<sup>18</sup>Furgurson, 105-106.

<sup>19</sup>*Atlas*, plate 41, #1.

<sup>20</sup>Harris, 1 May 1863.

<sup>21</sup>John Bigelow Jr., *The Campaign of Chancellorsville* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1910; reprint, New York: Morningside Press, 1991) map 12.

<sup>22</sup>Key, 24 November 1898.

<sup>23</sup>Luvas and Nelson, 171-172.

<sup>24</sup>Key, 24 November 1898.

<sup>25</sup>*OR*, 25.1, 942.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 970-971.

<sup>27</sup>Furgurson, 148-169.

<sup>28</sup>Key, 2 December 1898.

<sup>29</sup>Furgurson, 168.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 94.

<sup>31</sup>*OR*, 25.1, 627

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 633.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 651.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 637

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 973.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 940-941.

<sup>37</sup>Furgurson, 171.

<sup>38</sup>Key, 2 December 1898.

<sup>39</sup>Stephen W. Sears, *Chancellorsville* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996), 272.

<sup>40</sup>Key, 2 December 1898.

<sup>41</sup>OR, 25.1, 967.

<sup>42</sup>Bigelow, Map 19.

<sup>43</sup>OR, 25.1, 642.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 640-641.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 642-643.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 643.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 644.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 639-640.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 663.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 657.

<sup>51</sup>Key, 2 December 1898.

<sup>52</sup>Sears, 277.

<sup>53</sup>OR, 25.1, 183.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 664.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 652.

<sup>56</sup>Sears, 280.

<sup>57</sup>OR, 25.1, 970.

<sup>58</sup>Jackson, 18 May 1863.

<sup>59</sup>OR, 25.1, 970-971.

<sup>60</sup>Jackson, 18 May 1863.

<sup>61</sup>Richard W. Freeman, undated sketch from a series of letters written in 1915-1916 to Cornelia Tevis, Portland, Oregon. Originals in the hand of S. Tevis Grinstead, Houston, Texas.

<sup>62</sup>Bigelow, 345-346.

<sup>63</sup>Henderson, 728-795.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 759.

<sup>65</sup>Key, 2 December 1898.

<sup>66</sup>Bigelow, 353.

<sup>67</sup>OR, 25.1, 971.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 968.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 970.

<sup>70</sup>Noel G. Harrison, *Chancellorsville Battlefield Sites* (Lynchburg: E. H. Howard, Inc., 1990), 16.

<sup>71</sup>OR, 25.1, 972.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 974.

<sup>73</sup>George W. Beavers, Record Group 57-1-1 Civil War Miscellany, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Henderson, 764-765.

<sup>76</sup>*OR*, 25.1, 972.

<sup>77</sup>Harris, 3 May 1863.

<sup>78</sup>Key, 15 December 1898.

<sup>79</sup>Harris, 3 May 1863.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 6 May 1863.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup>*OR*, 25.1, 969.

<sup>83</sup>Harris, 6 May 1863.



## CHAPTER 6

### WINNERS AT GETTYSBURG

#### Campaigning in Another Country

As the Army of Northern Virginia took stock in camps around Fredericksburg in the month following the victory at Chancellorsville, its leaders knew that it could not stay and defend the Rappahannock River line forever. General Hooker still maintained the defeated but still huge Army of the Potomac across the river from Fredericksburg. Robert E. Lee again decided that to end the Civil War on favorable terms to the South, he needed to carry the fight north of the Potomac River.

Major changes needed to be made before the army moved north. Lee split the two corps of his army into three. General Richard S. Ewell moved up from division command to lead Second Corps.<sup>1</sup> Among leadership changes, Lee confirmed General Robert Rodes as the permanent head of D. H. Hill's old division and reviewed the now Rodes' Division at a ceremony on May 29. Doles' apparently did not completely approve of the impression given by his brigade because he conducted a brigade review of his own the day after.<sup>2</sup> General Ewell ordered another review for June 3. So many reviews convinced a soldier in Company F of the 44th Georgia to remark "something's out, boys."<sup>3</sup>

On June 3, an order pre-empted Ewell's review with confirmation of an impending campaign. The order directed units to cook three days' rations, pack them in the soldiers' haversacks, and be ready to move. The 44th Georgia vacated its camps at 3

A.M. the next day with about 400 men moving under arms, a considerable decrease from the approximately 600 that fought at Chancellorsville. Officers speculated on Culpeper Court House as the march's destination.<sup>4</sup>

The regiment reached camp a mile or so beyond Spotsylvania Court House the evening of June 4. The next day's march began at 5 A.M. and capped a two day move of twenty-five miles when it ended in the vicinity of Verdierville. On the next two days Doles' Brigade wound through country lanes and by-roads cross the Rapidan River at Somerville Ford, pass through Culpepper Court House, and camp three miles above the town toward Rixeyville on the evening of June 7.<sup>5</sup> The men rested the next day.<sup>6</sup>

On June 9, Rodes' Division prepared to support Confederate cavalry engaged at Brandy Station. Doles' Brigade formed a line of battle and advanced on the battlefield from the south to around the Barbour House, but saw no action.<sup>7</sup> At the end of the day, the regiments returned to the vicinity of their previous night's campsite. Here, for the first and only time during the war, the 44th Georgia made arrangements to have the regiment's knapsacks carried by wagons. To the officers, this indicated a campaign of some duration could be expected.<sup>8</sup> Rodes ordered that surplus regimental baggage and tents be sent to the rear and wagons filled with three days' rations. This, coupled with the three days' worth carried in the division train and three days of cooked rations carried on each soldier, meant Rodes' Division could feed itself for nine days, although Rodes still intended to subsist off the land whenever he could.<sup>9</sup>

For June 10 and 11, the line of march angled toward the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Shenandoah Valley over the worst road the 44th Georgia ever marched upon to

bivouac a mile and a half north of Flint Hill. The marching columns crossed the Blue Ridge through Chester Gap early on June 12 and forded both forks of the Shenandoah River. Doles' Brigade completed a tiring day's march of eighteen miles by camping by Stone Bridge crossroads near a span over Borden Run along the present Clarke and Warren County lines for the night.<sup>10</sup>

Doles' Brigade marched on June 13 as the unit detailed for the army's wagon train guard. The 44th Georgia soldiers universally disliked this type of duty, made all the more worrisome by the very hot weather.<sup>11</sup> Rodes' Division marched east toward Berryville while Ewell's other two divisions continued on to Winchester. Within two miles of Berryville, Rodes called for Doles to move his brigade on an encirclement of the town, but Union forces abandoned Berryville before the 44th Georgia could deploy. The Union troops discarded hundreds of tents and camp equipment, and many of the 44th Georgia soldiers filled their haversacks with sugar, coffee, bacon, and other foodstuffs. Cooking utensils picked up in the now empty Federal camps would warm food for the 44th Georgia troops for months to come.<sup>12</sup>

Freed of duty guarding the wagon trains, the 44th Georgia began its longest and most exhausting day's march of the war early on June 14. The route wound north to Summit Point, west past the camps near Bunker Hill around midday, and then north to Martinsburg via Darkesville. Near the vicinity of Martinsburg, the men noticed the discarded gear, dead horses, and corpses that marked a cavalry skirmish that morning between General Jenkins' cavalry and Federal infantry. Several Federal shells passed over the marching column, which prompted General Rodes to immediately form a line of

battle west of the Valley Turnpike. He placed Doles' Brigade in the center and pushed on rapidly toward the town.<sup>13</sup>

As the 44th Georgia entered Martinsburg, Rodes assigned it the duty of salvaging a depot set on fire by the withdrawing Federals. The men put the flames out, saving bacon, flour, and 6,000 bushels of corn and oats.<sup>14</sup> They noticed an old, seemingly destitute couple standing around the smoking depot. The couple told the 44th Georgia soldiers that the retreating Federal soldiers refused to share a particle of food in the depot before setting it on fire. The Confederate firefighters shared some of the saved provisions with them, and the elderly woman insisted on baking bread for the men in exchange for their kindness.<sup>15</sup>

After his troops secured part of Martinsburg and saved the provisions, Doles received Rodes' directive to detail a regiment to secure the town.<sup>16</sup> Doles picked the 44th Georgia and also assigned it the task of posting a detachment up the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to block some expected Federal reinforcements. Colonel Lumpkin delegated this duty to an element commanded by Captain Key and probably drawn largely from Key's Company B. A sole artillery piece supported the mission. The men picked a deep cut in the railroad bed, posted the cannon, prepared some rocks to roll down on the tracks as obstructions, and settled in to wait, but no train ventured down the tracks.<sup>17</sup> And this movement closed out a day that saw the 44th Georgia march thirty miles, assist in capturing a town, and extinguish a burning depot.<sup>18</sup>

Early the next morning, the regiment rose, pulled in Captain Key's detachment, and cooked some of the salvaged provisions as rations for the march. Doles' Brigade left

Martinsburg at noon on a very hot day and trooped north to Williamsport, Maryland, crossing the Potomac at sunset. The men marched on through the town to the strains of "Dixie" and cheered the song long and loud. A Confederate flag floating in front of a local hotel drew three more thunderous cheers before the regiment moved another half-mile outside the town to camp in a field.<sup>19</sup>

The 44th Georgia and Doles' Brigade remained in the immediate vicinity of Williamsport until June 19. Despite the spirit the men displayed the night before, General Rodes noticed that exhaustion and lack of shoes had begun to take its toll in his brigades and, after consulting with General Ewell, brought the division halt for a rest period.<sup>20</sup> The quartermasters in Doles' Brigade purchased many hats, shoes, and boots for the soldiers needing them from local merchants in Williamsport. Molasses also changed hands cheaply. To the surprise of several Confederates, the Maryland storekeepers readily accepted the Confederate bills as payment.<sup>21</sup>

Fed and clothed, the 44th Georgia soldiers left Williamsport early on June 19 when the brigade took up a line of march to Hagerstown. The regiment camped southeast of Hagerstown near the tiny village of Funkstown. Ironically, the camp occupied the banks of Antietam Creek, downstream along which the 44th Georgia fought at Sharpsburg eight months before. At 5 A.M. on June 22 the brigade departed in the direction of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.<sup>22</sup>

The route crossed the Pennsylvania state line and passed through Middleburg on the way to Green Castle. Residents seemed terribly frightened at the appearance of a rebel army at their doorstep, a fact that amused many of the 44th Georgia men.<sup>23</sup> The

regiment rested in camp at Green Castle until June 24 before moving straight north to Chambersburg. Rodes' troops moved through the town in spirited fashion with bands playing at the head of each regiment before picking campsites about two miles north of the town<sup>24</sup> along Conococheague Creek.<sup>25</sup>

Lee's Army of Northern Virginia continued to move at what seemed to the marching soldiers to be a leisurely pace. Marches began early in the day and often concluded before sundown, and rest days seemed more frequent. Doles Brigade rested around Chambersburg for a day and some of the soldiers obtained passes to visit the town. The tidy village impressed many who saw it in the 44th Georgia for days afterward and the men routinely compared other villages unfavorably to Chambersburg. As pleasing as Chambersburg was, the regiment pulled out the next day, marching northeast ten miles to Shippensburg.<sup>26</sup>

The march route for June 27 took the 44th Georgia northeast through the Pennsylvania hamlets of Leesburg, Jacksonville, Centreville, and Stone Tavern before reaching Carlisle before sunset. The regiment received mail from home and set up camp for three nights on the campus grass around the buildings of Dickinson College. Colonel Lumpkin detailed a few companies for provost guard and Company I for picket duty. The ever-present Captain Key commanded the provost guard and saw to it that the regimental men detailed with him could pick cherries and trade with the local populace for baked goods.<sup>27</sup>

Captain Key and the provost guard helped maintain tight control over the town and furnished guards for a number of shops and homes.<sup>28</sup> Soldiers could not leave the

camp area and visit businesses in Carlisle, but many inhabitants did visit the camps.

Among the camp visitors, the 44th Georgia men talked with many former Union soldiers that claimed to have fought at Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville and returned home on expiration of their short enlistments. The former soldiers claimed they would not fight again, but Captain Reese of Company F could not be convinced that they would not take up arms again.<sup>29</sup> Reese and his soldiers had enlisted for three years or the duration of the war and he probably viewed the former Federal soldiers returning home while the war still went on with some disgust.

Far out of touch with what Lee intended to do, General Hooker moved his army out of position near Leesburg along the Potomac River to belatedly give chase on June 25. By this time, most of the Army of Northern Virginia marched on Pennsylvania soil and Hooker had only a couple of days left in command. Partly for the disaster at Chancellorsville and partly for losing confidence in him, President Lincoln relieved Hooker on June 27. Early the next morning, General George Meade found himself in charge of the Federal army.<sup>30</sup>

During the night of June 29, elements of Jenkins' cavalry brought in to Carlisle 119 Federal prisoners captured in skirmishes around Harrisburg, the state capital of Pennsylvania. The provost detail guarded the prisoners in the town's Market House until the next morning.<sup>31</sup> Harrisburg lay just sixteen miles northeast of Carlisle, and many soldiers eagerly anticipated visiting the capital as an invader the next day.<sup>32</sup>

However, in response to Some of General Meade's movements and his own intentions, Lee issued orders to concentrate the Army of Northern Virginia near

Cashtown, southwest of Carlisle. The 44th Georgia left Carlisle with Doles' Brigade and marched south on the Carlisle Pike early on the morning of June 30. After making about twenty miles that day, Doles' Brigade arrived in Heidlersburg and camped for the night.<sup>33</sup>

As the 44th Georgia filed out of camp and headed southwest the next morning toward a fight near a town of which very few of them had ever heard, the Union troops that would oppose them began marching northeast out of camps around Emmitsburg, Maryland.<sup>34</sup> Although the 44th Georgia men did not know the place of the coming battle, they knew intimately the troops they would eventually tangle with: none other than General Howard's Eleventh Corps routed so convincingly at Chancellorsville two months before. At Middletown, the lead regiment of Doles' column turned south on the Bendersville Road to follow the units in front. Dust rose thicker as the men stepped out to quicken the pace. Cannon rumbled vaguely in the distance. Ahead lay Gettysburg.

#### Winning the Field North of Gettysburg

Marching toward Gettysburg on that sunny July 1 morning were 348 men and 35 officers in the 44th Georgia.<sup>35</sup> The battlefield arena awaiting them north of Gettysburg resembled a small square with a large "V" balanced on top of it, and a "Y" placed inside the "V." The square represented the town. The Mummasburg Pike ran on the left, or western, leg of the "V," and the Harrisburg Road formed the right, or eastern, one. Splitting the "V" almost exactly in the middle is the Carlisle Road heading due north. About three-quarters of a mile beyond the outskirts of Gettysburg the road forked at Blocher Creek, with the Bendersville (also called the Carlisle, and sometimes the



Newville) Road angling northwest and a secondary road to Carlisle, today called the Table Rock Road, branching off northeast.<sup>36</sup>

Oak Hill, a ridge-like extension of Seminary Ridge, ran north-south across the western part of the "V" and Rock Creek did the same for the eastern part. Between Oak Hill and Rock Creek lay cleared farmland planted in corn, wheat, and forage.<sup>37</sup> Folds in the terrain, a few treelines and fences along fields, and the odd stream provided some cover, but not very much. The 44th Georgia and its sister units in Doles' Brigade would fight nearly all the hot afternoon of July 1 to wrest possession of this terrain from the Federal Eleventh Corps.

Rodes' Division approached Gettysburg down the Bendersville Road. The division left the road at about 11 A.M. to move south cross-country along the high ground of Keckler's Ridge, an extension of Oak Hill. Rodes intended to fall on the exposed flank of Union troops engaged against A. P. Hill's Corps approaching from the west. The rough, wooded terrain slowed the division well over an hour, which still marched with all but one brigade in column.<sup>38</sup>

The wooded ridgeline hampered the brigade commanders' attack dispositions, which they did not complete until after 1:30 P.M. As the division moved down off the high ground, Doles' Brigade formed on the left flank in the open ground astride the Bendersville Road near the W. Ross farm. Doles arrayed the brigade from west to east with the 21st Georgia west of the road and the 44th, 4th, and 12th Georgia east of it. The regiments threw out skirmishers to drive off some outposts from the 9th New York Cavalry in the vicinity of Blocher's Knoll.<sup>39</sup> The skirmishers drove away the outposts

and apparently made it as far south as the Adams County Alms House before engaging enemy infantry.<sup>40</sup> As formations from Eleventh Corps deployed north of Gettysburg, the skirmishers soon fell back and relinquished Blocher's Knoll<sup>41</sup> to Federal infantry from Von Gilsa's Brigade.<sup>42</sup> The advantage of arriving undetected on the Union right flank passed away. Doles and the 44th Georgia with the rest of Rodes' Division would have to fight for the plains north of Gettysburg.

Schimmelfennig's and Barlow's Divisions moving out rapidly north from Gettysburg comprised the majority of the Federal Eleventh Corps.<sup>43</sup> Rodes counted on Doles' Georgians to prevent the newly arriving Federals from turning his left flank.<sup>44</sup> Rodes' other four brigades attacked elsewhere piecemeal. Doles occupied the left flank of the Confederate line for well over an hour alone and unsupported with a developing enemy in his front.<sup>45</sup> Concerned, he slowly pulled his left flank to a position in the fork of the "Y" formed by the Bendersville and Carlisle secondary roads by about 2:30 P.M.<sup>46</sup> The men in the 44th Georgia could easily see the Eleventh Corps divisions forming in front of them. In a disastrous set of circumstances unfolding for the Federals, Major General Jubal Early arrived on the field from the northwest with his uncommitted division. After a few preparations, Early attacked the Eleventh Corps troops in his front at approximately 3 P.M. Almost immediately following it, Doles sent his brigade forward across Blocher Run against the 107th Ohio of Ames' Brigade and the 68th New York from Von Gilsa's Brigade.<sup>47</sup>

The 107th Ohio gave way quickly, losing all of its field grade officers and according to the captain left in command "suffered heavily in killed and wounded."<sup>48</sup> The

survivors broke for the safety of Gettysburg. The 75th Ohio moved up to try and stem the grey tide threatening the division. According to the 75th's commander Colonel A. L. Harris, this unsupported advance suffered "heavy losses in killed, wounded, and missing."<sup>49</sup> The sacrifice bought very little time in the face of the Georgians' assault. The terrain contained a number of lime-sinks that the retreating Federals gathered in for shelter from Confederate rifle fire. The advancing Confederates trapped many in the sinks and captured them.<sup>50</sup>

During the advance, First Sergeant Richard W. Freeman of Company E received a grazing wound to his head. He dropped to the ground thinking that his head had been shot off. A nearby officer examined him and pronounced the wound as not serious. Relieved, Freeman jumped to his feet. His relief turned to dismay when he saw that the bullet hole and blood ruined his \$40 hat purchased in Richmond. He reluctantly tossed it aside and took a cap from a Federal corpse. As Freeman and another soldier moved on through the tall grass, a solitary Federal soldier jumped up out of the grass and fired at them from close range. He missed, then threw his hands up to surrender. This enraged Freeman's comrade and he urged Freeman to kill the man since he had the only loaded rifle of the two. When Freeman refused to do it, the other Confederate quickly loaded his rifle and shot the man dead.<sup>51</sup>

As General Early's attack broke the Union line along Rock Creek, Doles continued his movement south down both side of the Carlisle Road. The 44th Georgia advanced with the road on its right flank and the 4th Georgia on its left. The 21st Georgia wheeled to the right to meet an attack by Krzyzanowski's Brigade and

supporting Union infantry regiments coming up from fields northeast of Gettysburg. This created a gap between the 21st and 44th Georgia that the 157th New York exploited by wheeling right to take a position along the Carlisle Road on the 44th Georgia's right flank.<sup>52</sup>

The 157th New York fired some volleys down the 44th Georgia's line. This heavy and accurate fire caused at least one officer to mistake the 157th for a force of two regiments. In these bloody few moments, the 44th Georgia suffered the most casualties it would experience in Pennsylvania and lost its commander. Colonel Lumpkin collapsed with a bullet through his right knee.<sup>53</sup> The hail of lead also dropped Company B's Captain Key with wounds in his left thigh and hip.<sup>54</sup>

Suddenly the 21st Georgia delivered several devastating volleys into the 157th New York's left flank. The 21st had been sheltering in the cover provided by tall grass and a country lane until the 157th New York approached. Unable to deal with threats to its front and left simultaneously, the 157th New York crumbled. Not content with letting them go, the 44th Georgia completed a change of front and charged across the Carlisle Road with fixed bayonets.<sup>55</sup>

The 157th New York paid a huge price, thanks largely to the 21st Georgia. The remnant of the 157th reported 27 killed outright and 166 wounded, almost all of them along the edge of the Carlisle Road, and another 114 captured.<sup>56</sup> The 75 percent casualty rate of the 157th New York, which all of Doles' regiments had a hand in inflicting in scant minutes, represented one of the most severe percentage losses of any Federal regiment in the entire three-day battle of Gettysburg.<sup>57</sup>

As the 44th Georgia swept over the dead and wounded men of the 157th New York, Captin James Connally of Company E noticed a wounded Federal officer. Connally spoke to him briefly and determined the man's identity as Lieutenant Frank E. Gates of the 157th's Company G. Gates asked for water and Connally gave the severely wounded officer his own canteen before continuing forward with his unit.<sup>58</sup> Connally's company First Sergeant Freeman also stumbled across a wounded Federal officer in some wheat. According to Freeman, the officer identified himself as the adjutant of a New York regiment, probably the 157th. Freeman thought the officer's wound probably would prove to be mortal and listened to the man speak of seeing his mother before he died. After doing what he could for the man as the battle continued, Freeman left the supposedly dying man to rejoin Company E.<sup>59</sup> However, it is possible that Connally and Freeman both assisted the same wounded soldier. The greviously injured Gates recovered and was promoted to Captain early in 1864.<sup>60</sup>

Maneuvering across the Carlisle Road to assist with the destruction of the 157th New York brought the 44th Georgia squarely on the left flank of the 300 blue infantrymen in the 82nd Ohio. Although the regiments were about evenly matched in strength, its position on the flank of the 82nd Ohio gave the 44th Georgia a decisive edge. Volleys of rifle fire slammed into the 82nd Ohio, killing or mortally wounding 29 and injuring 73 in minutes. The Federals gave way, losing about 80 more men captured to the pursuing Georgians.<sup>61</sup>

Major Peebles now turned his attention to the 75th Pennsylvania, the regiment on the 82nd Ohio's right flank. The 75th, commanded by a Colonel Maher, was already

pressed by the 4th Georgia in its front. The 44th Georgia volleys that passed over the 82nd Ohio sailed on into the 75th, hurting the regiment badly<sup>62</sup> and shooting Maher's horse.<sup>63</sup> The 44th Georgia, now back on the east side of the Carlisle Road, closed to within 40 yards of the 75th's left flank and rear and unleashed another blast of rifle fire, this time mortally wounding the dismounted Maher.<sup>64</sup> The 75th's acting commander attempted to shift around to face the 44th Georgia and move through a gap in a fenceline. Between the 82nd Ohio breaking and this maneuver, the 75th lost 111 men killed and wounded.<sup>65</sup> The vast majority of these casualties fell to 44th Georgia bullets.

With the attack turning into a vast pursuit, the 44th Georgia struggled to maintain contact with the 21st and 4th Georgia on its flanks. In the one-half hour since the attack began, Doles' regiments played critical roles in driving one Union division and another brigade in disorder from the plains north of Gettysburg. Now they began to receive artillery fire from an opponent they had faced before at Chancellorsville. Canister fire from Captain Dilger's Battery I, 1st Ohio Light Artillery and Lieutenant Wheeler's 13th New York Battery rained down on the 44th Georgia and further complicated an organized pursuit. Peebles directed the 44th with the 4th Georgia close on the left flank to flank the gun sections. The two regiments maneuvered around to within 100 yards of the gun positions and forced them to retire.<sup>66</sup>

General Doles now moved southwest in an attempt to cut off Federal units from the I Corps. These units were withdrawing from fighting west of the town along the Chambersburg Pike and had not been previously engaged by Doles, at least at Gettysburg. One of the Union regiments threatened by this shift was the 45th New York,

then reforming on the grounds of Gettysburg College.<sup>67</sup> Doles' Brigade had stampeded the 45th New York during the tidal wave attack on May 2 at Chancellorsville, but Major Peebles reported that his exhausted troops in the 44th Georgia could not execute the movement quickly enough on this day to trap the fleeing Federals.<sup>68</sup> Even though Doles' maneuver hurried and further disorganized their retreat, it did not bring the Federal troops into decisive action outside the town.<sup>69</sup>

The 44th Georgia and its sister regiments pressed the remnants of Federal troops close enough to cause them to abandon their position and retreat through the town. Doles' men followed closely, swamping any attempt by the Federals to make stands at street corners and capturing hundreds. The commander of the 45th New York reported over two-thirds of his regiment lost in the streets of Gettysburg.<sup>70</sup> For the second time in less than two months the 45th New York scrapped with the 44th Georgia and came out of the second fight much the worse for wear. Doles entered the west side of Gettysburg and his skirmishers emerged from the south side of the town engaged the 9th New York Cavalry in the vicinity of Cemetery Hill with long-range rifle shots.<sup>71</sup> The fight through the city streets disorganized Doles' regiments, already in disarray from the hour-long attack and pursuit. Reorganization, replenishment and rest would soon be necessary.

As he lay wounded near the Carlisle Pike, Captain Key witnessed the conclusion of the fight north of Gettysburg. Stray rounds splattered into the ground around him and he dragged himself twenty yards to some cover. This helped, but an occasional artillery round still sought out his sheltered position. Litter bearers from the 4th and 44th Georgia found him and moved him to an ambulance for evacuation to a temporary field hospital a

mile or so from Gettysburg.<sup>72</sup> This was most likely Rodes' division hospital at the J. S. Forney farm off the Mummasburg Road.<sup>73</sup>

Private G. W. Webb, one of the 44th Georgia's hospital stewards and a physician before the war, directed attendants to tear off a barn door and set it on stakes driven into the ground. This served as an operating table with Key as the first patient. Webb and Dr. Abner McGarity, the 44th's surgeon, removed a deformed slug from Key and gave it back to him as a memento. Colonel Lumpkin soon came in with a shattered right knee. With Webb and McGarity probably performing the procedure, his leg was amputated above the knee joint. Captain Haygood, the commander of Company C, had his left hand and forearm amputated at the same hospital.<sup>74</sup>

As skirmishers from Doles' and Ramseur's Brigades pushed south of Gettysburg, Rodes ordered the brigade commanders to pull back to an east-west street in the center of town, maintain skirmishers in front of them, and establish contact with Confederate units believed to be on their left and right.<sup>75</sup> Doles' Brigade took up position as the left of three brigades on York Street for the night. The 44th Georgia's occupied a position in the street east of the courthouse.<sup>76</sup> Rodes reported 2,500 Federal prisoners of war taken by his division.<sup>77</sup> Most of them surrendered to Doles' Brigade, and a fair number of them fell into the hands of the 44th Georgia. The brigade report listed nine 44th Georgia soldiers missing, all of them on July 1.<sup>78</sup>

For the amount and intensity of fighting, the 44th Georgia suffered relatively light on July 1. The brigade report lists ten killed and forty-nine wounded.<sup>79</sup> Another source reports six killed and sixty-five wounded in the first day's action for the 44th Georgia



with three more of the wounded dying before leaving Gettysburg.<sup>80</sup> At least seven of the wounded expired from their wounds, and no less than ten would be abandoned to the Federals in field hospitals as too injured to be moved when the army left Gettysburg four days later.<sup>81</sup>

### Lost Opportunities

The 44th's exhausted soldiers took stock as they rested in battlelines on York and Middle Streets on the night of July 1. Rodes' Division had captured over 2,500 Federals on July 1.<sup>82</sup> Many of the 44th Georgia men served on details to round up groups of Federal soldiers still hiding in the town and guard those who did not get away. The rest of the men lay down on the stone pavement to sleep.<sup>83</sup>

Officer vacancies had to be filled before the next day's fight. First Lieutenant N. B. Durham, a physician before the war who probably realised as well as anyone that Captain Haygood's injury would discharge him if not kill him, took over command of Company C. First Lieutenant James M. Henderson replaced the popular Captain Key in Company B. First Lieutenant John A. Huie, son of the former commander of Company G, lay dying with a mortal wound. With his death, the last of the Huie family passed from the Huie Guards. The company would not hold an election to replace him until the battle concluded.<sup>84</sup>

Ten Company C soldiers went down with wounds on July 1, strongly hinting that the company may have been on the right flank of the 44th Georgia during the fight with the 157th New York. Private Theophilus Simonton died on July 3 from a gunshot in his

left side, joining his brother who died in 1862, but he would be the only Company C soldier dying of his wound at Gettysburg. Surgeons judged the other nine soldiers, including Captain Haygood, as fit to travel with the army should it have to move.<sup>85</sup>

Early on the morning of July 2, skirmishers from Doles' Brigade made contact with Union skirmishers sent down from Cemetery Hill. The two sides exchanged shots intermittently throughout the day in what Doles described as "heavy skirmishing," but the 44th Georgia did not lose a man in these scrapes. The regiment continued to rest along the east-west streets of Gettysburg. At about 8 P.M., the 44th's officers ordered the men into line for a movement by the right flank to the open ground immediately southwest of Gettysburg. Rodes intended to attack the strong Union positions on Cemetery Hill from the northwest around dusk, coordinating with an attack by Early's Division from the northeast.<sup>86</sup>

For whatever reason, Rodes started his division moving too late. The brigades filed out of the town and formed an attack formation with three brigades in front and two following. Doles occupied the left of the front line with the 21st Georgia, then the 44th, on the left of his line.<sup>87</sup> The formation did not advance until after Early assaulted Cemetery Hill with no success.<sup>88</sup>

When the division line did advance, the men fixed bayonets under a rising moon. Many of the soldiers in the battleline harbored fatalistic thoughts about their own survival. Naturally a formidable position, they knew their Federal opponents worked hard throughout July 2 to make Cemetery Hill even stronger.<sup>89</sup> The 44th Georgia knew

firsthand the consequences of assaulting prepared Union positions after the debacle at Ellerson's Mill a little over a year previously.

The advance passed over Long Lane, a dirt road leading out of Gettysburg to the southwest, with at least a portion of the 44th Georgia moving through the Adams County Fairgrounds.<sup>90</sup> About 300 yards past Long Lane, officers silently passed the order to lie down. The Federal positions sat behind stone walls barely 100 yards in front of the prone lines.<sup>91</sup> Federal skirmishers on guard against just this sort of attack opened fire, shooting down some of the Confederate skirmishers. Several cannon sent shells screaming over the head of the men on the ground.<sup>92</sup> General Ramseur, commanding one of Rodes' brigades, made a personal reconnaissance of the Federal positions, then conferred with Doles and another brigade commander personally. All three recommended that the attack be called off, and Rodes acquiesced to this recommendation. The front brigades moved back to Long Lane and hurriedly began to dig and add fence rails to the scant cover provided by the slightly sunken roadbed.<sup>93</sup> The sounds of chopping, digging, and artillery being moved into position provided proof that Cemetery Hill grew stronger.<sup>94</sup>

The 44th Georgia stayed on the northeast end of Long Lane through July 3. Given the advanced positions of the lines at Long Lane, skirmishing continued to be heavy. But the Federal artillery did not throw many shells in their direction, and the 44th men merely served as spectators to Pickett's Charge on the afternoon of July 3.<sup>95</sup> The men lay nervously on the ground as the fire of over 100 Confederate artillery pieces went in over their heads to strike Union positions on Cemetery Ridge prior to Pickett's attack.<sup>96</sup> Several shots from the friendly cannoneers went short and fell among the 44th Georgia.<sup>97</sup>

Of course, Pickett's Charge failed to dislodge the Army of the Potomac from Cemetery Ridge. Darkness fell as the Army of Northern Virginia's leadership decided on a further course of action. At 1 A.M. on the morning of July 4, the 44th Georgia and the rest of Rodes' Division relocated to Seminary Ridge with the division split halfway on the north and south sides of the railroad grade. The officers expected the Federals to attack, and the men devoted all day to strengthening the position. The Federals did not assault the position, however, allowing the regiments to consolidate their wounded. Those that could walk or stand riding in ambulances departed in a southwest direction from the area. Those that could not, over 750 in Rodes' Division including several 44th Georgia men, would be left in the hands of the Federals when Lee withdrew the next day. Surgeons, attendants, medicines, and food would be left with them.<sup>98</sup>

Company G's Private Jesse B. Bailey was one of the wounded left behind as he lay recuperating from an amputated left arm. A gunshot had ripped into "Dock" Bailey's upper left arm on July 1, and the surgeons removed the arm above the elbow the next day. Most likely this procedure took place at the same hospital that treated Colonel Lumpkin and Captain Key. After the battle, Bailey stayed for a while at Gettysburg before Federal medical authorities evacuated him to a more permanent hospital. Eventually, his recuperation took him to Decamp General Hospital in New York harbor before Federal authorities paroled him in late September with his service in the 44th Georgia effectively ended.<sup>99</sup>

Captain Key moved with the wounded fit to travel on the morning of July 4 toward Hagerstown. The wagon train carrying the wounded stopped about four miles

into the journey to remove men not holding up well in the rocking wagons. During the night of July 4 and well into the morning of July 5, Federal cavalry raided the Confederate wounded and supply trains, adding to the misery of the 44th Georgia wounded. After more brushes with Federal cavalry, the trains continued on into Hagerstown at sundown July 5. Colonel Lumpkin and Captain Haygood soon arrived at a hospital on the grounds of Kee-Mar College, a local female seminary. Hospital attendants carried them to an upstairs room and made them as comfortable as possible. Lumpkin soon made the determination that he could not continue and sent for Captin Key to inform him of his decision. Captain Haygood elected to stay as well, and Captain Key arranged for a Private Montgomery of Company C to stay with them.<sup>100</sup> After making this decision, Lumpkin met some old colleagues of his from medical school. They agreed to take care of him, which gave the Colonel a good bit of consolation.<sup>101</sup>

### Marching South with Heads Held High

Early in the evening of July 4, the officers of the 44th Georgia told the men to save their rations as much as possible. This served as a clear indication to all of them that the army would be falling back soon. In the middle of the night, the regiment filed from its position and formed in column on the Hagerstown Road heading southeast from Gettysburg. Delays kept the men by the road until daybreak. Rain showers compounded the feeling of defeat.<sup>102</sup>

The 44th Georgia made barely six miles on July 5, camping two miles west of the hámlet of Fairfield in the mud and rain.<sup>103</sup> The short distance resulted from frequent stops

to form a line of battle in response to pursuing Federal cavalry. The next day, Rodes Division assumed rear guard for the entire army. The 44th Georgia assisted in repelling two advances by the pursuing Federals on July 6. The first came from the direction of Gettysburg, and the second occurred at the spot where a road from Emmitsburg, Maryland, joined the Hagerstown Road. The 44th Georgia lost one man from Company I captured during these two brushes, and the march resumed about 3:30 P.M. After crossing the mountains by Monterey Springs, the regiment reached Waynesborough to camp for the night.<sup>104</sup>

After taking up the march for Hagerstown early on July 7, the 44th Georgia reached the town in the evening and camped next to a stream, almost certainly Antietam Creek again, where many of the men took the opportunity to wash away the Pennsylvania mud and dust. The army delivered welcome mail and newspapers from home while the regiment settled down to stay until July 11. Several men took the opportunity to visit Colonel Lumpkin and Captain Haygood. Lumpkin suffered considerably during his first three days in Hagerstown, although he thought he would eventually recover. Haygood's arm continued to heal. Perhaps loyalty to Colonel Lumpkin caused Haygood to remain with him, because it is a mystery otherwise why he elected to stay in Hagerstown rather than continue on with the retreating army.<sup>105</sup>

After dark on July 11, the 44th Georgia marched through the streets of Hagerstown and filed into a line of battle about one and a half miles from the town toward Williamsport. The men worked especially hard at throwing up defensive works for two reasons. First, the officers hoped the Federals would attack and give the Army of

Northern Virginia the opportunity to inflict a major defeat and more casualties.<sup>106</sup> And, second, high water of the Potomoc River temporarily pinned the Confederates north of the river.

For three days, the 44th sheltered behind fieldworks and awaited a Federal attack, but none came. The 44th Georgia soldiers universally agreed that an attack by the Union soliders would be a slaughter resembling Fredericksburg. They still wanted to be attacked because no one wanted to retreat into Virginia without beating the Federals in revenge for Gettysburg. Captain Reese of Company F thought it would be better if the Confederate forces did not force battles in the next campaigns, since the Southern cause had more credibility if the army acted as a defender instead of invading the North.<sup>107</sup>

On July 13, satisfied that the Army of the Potomac would not attack and the river level had dropped enough to allow passage through the fords, Lee began to withdraw his divisions across the river. The following evening the 44th Georgia forded the river with the rest of Rodes' Division just north of the aqueduct over the mouth of Conococheague Creek.<sup>108</sup> The men waded into the river in columns of fours with arms interlaced for support. They balanced their rifles and cartridge boxes on their shoulders to keep them dry, and wore their shoes to protect their feet from the sharp, rocky bottom.<sup>109</sup>

After exiting the river, the division turned south and moved to the vicinity of Falling Waters for a few hours of rest. At that point, a pontoon bridge erected by Lee's engineers provided passage across the river for the troops of A.P. Hill's and Longstreet's Corps. Witnessing this event, the 44th Georgia soldiers expressed in very strong language their displeasure at having to do all the wading with other soldiers crossing on

a bridge.<sup>110</sup> In this torrent of cursing, the Gettysburg Campaign ended for the 44th Georgia.

### Recovery from Gettysburg

From July 14 to the middle of September, the 44th Georgia marched throughout the northern tip of Virginia. General Lee intended to counter any threat from the Army of the Potomac, make some offensive threats of his own to keep General Meade off balance, and allow his army to heal. Commanders at all levels needed time to rest units, furlough wounded men, elect new leaders, and absorb a thin trickle of new recruits.

From Williamsport on July 14, the 44th Georgia marched to Martinsburg. From there, the next stop would be Darkesville on July 16. While the Second Corps camped at Darkesville, the fall of Port Hudson and Vicksburg in the western theater of operations became generally known throughout the ranks. Many men refused to believe it for several days. Rather than adversely affect the regiment's cohesion, the recent military disasters seemed to harden the 44th Georgia's resolve to see the conflict through to a successful conclusion.<sup>111</sup>

Doles' Brigade continued on until reaching the familiar campsites at Bunker Hill. The regiment's stay at the comfortable camp would be brief. Leaving Bunker Hill, the regiment moved to Winchester, and then to Front Royal.<sup>112</sup> Replacing brigade leaders lost to enemy action affected the 44th Georgia's leadership. Lieutenant A. H. Jackson moved up from Company C to be the assistant brigade commissary officer.<sup>113</sup> His former company elected Private William J. Mooney, a native of Belfast, Ireland, to take his



place.<sup>114</sup> Jackson had been one of the more popular soldiers in Company C and he would continue a close association with it until the end of the war.

Ewell's Second Corps followed the other two army corps in marching down the Shenandoah Valley. Rodes' Division reached Chester Gap on July 23, relieving a brigade of infantry holding the gap open for them. The 44th Georgia camped in the shadow of the Blue Ridge Mountains that night and ascended Chester Gap the next day. Federal forces blocked Rodes' transit of the gap, and the 44th Georgia reported one man missing at the gap in the effort to force through. Rodes turned his division south and marched for the next three days along the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Shenandoah River to Thornton's Gap, a distance of about twenty-eight miles. The 44th Georgia crossed Thornton's Gap, reporting Private J. J. Whitehead of Company C wounded in a skirmish near there on July 23, and marched down through Sperryville and from there on to Madison Court House.<sup>115</sup>

Relatively good qualities of marching fare were a feature of this movement. The regimental commissary issued the men freshly slaughtered beef and flour to make biscuits at stops along the way. Soldiers took advantage of rest halts to pick and eat blackberries growing in thickets by the roadside.<sup>116</sup> While camping at Madison Court House, the regiment slowly built its strength back up. Men recovered from wounds and returned to duty. Soldiers who for one reason or another straggled on the march to or back from Gettysburg caught up to the regiment here. Seriously wounded men from Chancellorsville furloughed home to Georgia to recuperate also trickled in, as did a small

number of recruits. By the end of the month, the regiment numbered very close to 350 again.<sup>117</sup>

Soldiers from the 44th Georgia returning from home brought disturbing news that the families at home viewed the disasters at Gettysburg and Vicksburg as the end for the Confederacy. Men in the ranks strongly disapproved of their families' attitudes and in letters home, they cautioned them against defeatism and told them not to be alarmed. Many men in the regiment felt that the South could still favorably conclude the war.<sup>118</sup>

Early August found the 44th Georgia in camp about two miles southwest of Orange Court House on the road to Gordonsville. The regiment, along with the other ones in Doles' Brigade planned to take advantage of the relative lull to drill. The regimental losses, leadership changes, and new recruits made this chore a necessity if the regiment were to continue as an effective fighting force.<sup>119</sup> While his regiment operated in the northern part of Virginia, Colonel Lumpkin remained recuperating as a wounded prisoner of war in Hagerstown. Private Montgomery, the soldier who stayed with Lumpkin in Hagerstown, escaped from the hospital and made his way back to the regiment in late August. Montgomery reported that Lumpkin's recovery did not look promising, a fact that Lieutenant Hull Jackson wrote in a letter to Lumpkin's former landlord and Company C namesake John Calvin Johnson back in Clarke County.<sup>120</sup>

The stump of Lumpkin's amputated right leg continued to heal slowly, causing the Colonel great periods of discomfort, but few complications cropped up until August. In mid-month Lumpkin developed typhoid fever and steadily grew worse. The medical care available to him could not intervene successfully, and he died on September 11.<sup>121</sup>

News of his death came as a crushing blow to the regiment, because Lumpkin repeatedly proved himself as both likable and tactically proficient. In letters home, 44th Georgia soldiers before and after his death described Lumpkin as gallant, gentlemanly, and efficient. He would be hard to replace both in camp and battle.

Lieutenant Colonel Peebles moved up to replace Lumpkin. His conduct as a tactician after coming over from the surgeon's ranks had been solid. At Gettysburg, after Lumpkin went down with his wound, Peebles capably directed the movements against the 157th New York. His promotion to Colonel would be backdated to take effect on September 11, the day of Lumpkin's passing. Major Beck, formally of Company K, moved up as expected to the Lieutenant Colonel's position. The unspectacular but competent Beck had served the Confederacy since the outbreak of the war and carried a wound from Malvern Hill the year before. Captain Key won election to major, and Lieutenant James M. Henderson took over as Company B's captain. Company B did not immediately elect a lieutenant to take Henderson's vacancy. It could well be that not enough men remained in the company to justify another officer being selected. This situation would frequently occur in the 44th Georgia until the end of the war.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Champ Clark, *Gettysburg: The Confederate High Tide* (Alexandria: Time-Life Books, Inc., 1985), 14.

<sup>2</sup>Harris, 29-30 May 1863.

<sup>3</sup>Reese, 22 September 1863.

<sup>4</sup>Harris, 4 June 1863.

<sup>5</sup>OR, 27.1, 546.

<sup>6</sup>Harris, 5-8 June 1863.

- <sup>7</sup>*OR*, 27.1, 546.
- <sup>8</sup>Harris, 9 June 1863.
- <sup>9</sup>*OR*, 27.1, 546.
- <sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup>Harris, 13 June 1863.
- <sup>12</sup>Reese, 22 September 1863.
- <sup>13</sup>Harris, 14 June 1863.
- <sup>14</sup>*OR*, 27.1, 549.
- <sup>15</sup>Key, 5 January 1899.
- <sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup>Harris, 14 June 1863.
- <sup>19</sup>Reese, 22 September 1863.
- <sup>20</sup>Thomas, 6.
- <sup>21</sup>Reese, 22 September 1863.
- <sup>22</sup>Harris, 16-22 June 1863.
- <sup>23</sup>Reese, 6 October 1863.
- <sup>24</sup>Thomas, 7.
- <sup>25</sup>*OR*, 27.1, 549.
- <sup>26</sup>Reese, 10 November 1863.
- <sup>27</sup>Key, 5 January 1899.
- <sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup>Reese, 10 November 1863.

<sup>30</sup>Clark, 34.

<sup>31</sup>Harris, 29 June 1863.

<sup>32</sup>OR, 27.1, 549.

<sup>33</sup>Key, 5 January 1899.

<sup>34</sup>OR, 27.1, 701.

<sup>35</sup>OR, 27.1, 585.

<sup>36</sup>Atlas, Plate 95, #1.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>David G. Martin, *Gettysburg: July 1*, rev. ed. (Gettysburg: Combined Books, Inc., 1996), 205.

<sup>39</sup>OR, 27.1, 938.

<sup>40</sup>Martin, 655.

<sup>41</sup>OR, 27.1, 581-582.

<sup>42</sup>Martin, 274.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 257.

<sup>44</sup>OR, 27.1, 553.

<sup>45</sup>Martin, 259.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 266.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 285.

<sup>48</sup>OR, 27.1, 720

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 715.

<sup>50</sup>Thomas, 475.

<sup>51</sup>Freeman.

<sup>52</sup>Martin, 296-297.

<sup>53</sup>Reese, 17 November 1863.

<sup>54</sup>Key, 12 January 1899.

<sup>55</sup>Martin, 296-297.

<sup>56</sup>OR, 27.1, 183.

<sup>57</sup>Martin, 302.

<sup>58</sup>*Final Report on the Battlefield of Gettysburg*, vol. 3 (Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, 1902), 1060-1061.

<sup>59</sup>Freeman.

<sup>60</sup>*Final Report on the Battlefield of Gettysburg*, 1061.

<sup>61</sup>OR, 27.1, 744.

<sup>62</sup>Martin, 299.

<sup>63</sup>OR, 27.1, 745.

<sup>64</sup>Martin, 299.

<sup>65</sup>OR, 27.1, 745.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 753.

<sup>67</sup>Martin, 319-320.

<sup>68</sup>OR, 27.1, 585.

<sup>69</sup>Martin, 320.

<sup>70</sup>OR, 27.1, 735.

<sup>71</sup>Martin, 328.

<sup>72</sup>Key, 12 January 1899.

<sup>73</sup>Gregory A. Coco, *Wasted Valor* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, Inc., 1990), 65.

<sup>74</sup>Key, 12 January 1899.

<sup>75</sup>OR, 27.1, 555.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 585.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 555.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 583.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Jackson, 10 July 1863.

<sup>81</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>82</sup>Harry W. Pfanz, *Gettysburg: Culp's Hill and Cemetery Hill* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 77.

<sup>83</sup>James W. Beck, letter to Augusta (Georgia) *Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel*, 5 September 1863.

<sup>84</sup>Henderson, 740-807.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 752-763.

<sup>86</sup>OR, 27.1, 582.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 585.

<sup>88</sup>Pfanz, map 15.1.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 279-280.

<sup>90</sup>Atlas, Plate 95, #1.

<sup>91</sup>OR, 27.1, 582.

<sup>92</sup>Beck, *Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel*, 5 September 1863.

<sup>93</sup>Pfanz, 280.

<sup>94</sup>Beck, *Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel*, 5 September 1863.

<sup>95</sup>Pfanz, 280.

<sup>96</sup>OR, 27.1, 557.

<sup>97</sup>Beck, *Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel*, 5 September 1863.

<sup>98</sup>OR, 27.1, 557.

<sup>99</sup>*Medical and Surgical History of the Civil War*, vol. 10 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1870; reprint, Wilmington: Broadfoot Publishing, 1992), 797 (hereafter cited as *MSHCW*).

<sup>100</sup>Key, 19 January 1899.

<sup>101</sup>Key, 26 January 1899.

<sup>102</sup>Reese, 17 November 1863.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup>OR, 27.1, 558.

<sup>105</sup>Jackson, 18 July 1863.

<sup>106</sup>Reese, 17 November 1863.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup>OR, 27.1, 558.

<sup>109</sup>Reese, 17 November 1863.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup>Jackson, 18 July 1863.

<sup>112</sup>Key, 16 February 1899.

<sup>113</sup>Jackson, 30 July 1863.

<sup>114</sup>Henderson, 751-763.

<sup>115</sup>Jackson, 30 July 1863.

<sup>116</sup>Charles R. Adams Jr., ed. *A Post of Honor: The Pryor Letters, 1861-63* (Fort Valley, GA: Garret Publications, Inc., 1989), 384.

<sup>117</sup>Jackson, 30 July 1863.

<sup>118</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup>Adams, 385.



<sup>120</sup>Jackson, 30 August 1863.

<sup>121</sup>Henderson, 751.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 716-838.

## CHAPTER 7

### EBB OF THE HIGH TIDE

#### Railroad Wrecking and Marching About

After sorting out the leadership changes brought on by Colonel Lumpkin's death and marching around the Rapidan River line, the 44th Georgia settled into what appeared to be very early winter camps in late September south of the river. The regiment busied itself with picketing one of a number of fords on the Rapidan, but this kind of easy duty could not last as long as the weather permitted the armies to take the field. News arrived around September 24 of the great Confederate victory at Chickamauga. This held a particular significance for 44th Georgia soldiers concerned about the Union forays in Georgia. The good tidings did much to boost the morale throughout Doles' Brigade and provided a refreshing tonic that offset bad news of the last two months.<sup>1</sup>

In late September, interest began building noticeably in religion. A captain in the 12th Georgia reported great interest developing about religious matters in Doles' Brigade. Ministers preached sermons nightly in the brigade's camp. Many soldiers joined the Methodist and Baptist faiths.<sup>2</sup> This religious feeling undoubtedly took on the same message as the sermons preached south of Fredericksburg during the preceeding winter, namely that Ggod would not abandon the Confederate cause.

Lee had sent one of his army's corps under General Longstreet south to bolster Confederate military fortunes around Chattanooga, materially contributing to the victory at Chickamauga. But Lee, ever the opportunist, elected to go on the offensive despite

being short one third of his forces. His attempts to threaten Washington, D.C., in October would be known as the Bristoe Campaign.<sup>3</sup> General Ewell moved most of his Second Corps back from a position picketing the Somerville-Raccoon-Morton's fords position on the Rapidan River late on the afternoon of October 8. As part of this movement, the 44th Georgia moved south from camp near Morton's Ford during that day and the next toward Orange Court House and then swung west to cross the upper Rapidan at Barnett's Ford by Madison's Mill. The regiment stopped after marching about three miles on the west side of the river toward Madison Court House.<sup>4</sup>

On October 10, the 44th Georgia moved with Rodes' Division through Madison Court House and then on to the northwest. Officers leading the columns took the men through several by-ways and cut across fields. This represented an effort to avoid detection of the movement by a Federal signal station posted atop Thoroughfare Mountain. A drenching rain in the afternoon kept the dust down, but the resulting mud tired the men. The exhausted soldiers in the 44th Georgia reached the area about 2 1/2 miles southwest of Griffinsburg before camping for the night. The marching columns of infantry came out on the Culpepper-Sperryville Pike after an early start of October 11. After camping in the vicinity of Bethel Church the 44th Georgia cooked three days' rations, another clue to the soldiers that more maneuvering would be forthcoming.<sup>5</sup>

October 12 saw Rodes' Division march to Rixeyville and then on to Jeffersonton. Northeast of Jeffersonton, Doles' Brigade skirmished with Federal troops in a running fight that lasted until all the Federals crossed over a bridge to the east bank of the Rappahannock at White Sulphur Springs. Doles' Brigade assisted in the capture of 300

Federals caught on the west side. Confederate artillery deployed to clear the opposite bank of Federal cavalry and artillery, allowing Rodes' Division with the 44th Georgia to cross a river with dry feet for a change. The regiment counted its ranks and found no casualties from the day's skirmish. The companies threw out pickets and camped for the night just over the river.<sup>6</sup>

On October 13, the 44th Georgia and Ewell's Corps moved up and occupied Warrenton. Early the next morning the three divisions in Ewell's Corps marched to the east to attack some Federal supply trains known to be operating in the area, but the 44th Georgia did not draw trigger. The 44th Georgia spent all of October 15 in a soggy campsite under a rainy sky. The downpours hindered the men's efforts to cook another three days' rations to store in their haversacks. That task completed, the men tried to catch what sleep that they could under the wet, miserable conditions.<sup>7</sup> It mattered very little, because a series of reverses suffered by A. P. Hill's First Corps near Bristoe Station would curtail the campaign and impel Lee to retreat.<sup>8</sup>

The next day continued the hard rains, but the 44th Georgia had work to do. Details from the regiment spent all day in the rain tearing up parts of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. This work would be vital toward slowing any Federal pursuit if General Lee elected to move the Army of Northern Virginia back south of the Rappahannock River. The Georgians levered up track in the sector assigned to Rodes' Division between Kettle Run southwest to Catlett's Station. After that strenuous activity, the regiment moved to a camp near Warrenton Junction (now Calverton) the next day.<sup>9</sup>

Rising well before daybreak on October 18, Rodes' Division broke camp and marched southwest toward Bealeton, camping for the night. Rodes again aroused his men well before daylight to get them moving across the Rappahannock River. Another drenching rainstorm blotted out the sunrise as the men forded the river on the morning of October 19.

When General Doles halted the men at campsites south of Brandy Station near Kelly's Ford that afternoon, it brought the 44th Georgia's participation in the Bristoe Campaign to a close.<sup>10</sup> The men had marched long miles in mud, lay in the rain, slept only occasionally, and saw very little action. The bad news would be that enough good weather remained for another campaign in northern Virginia.

#### The Mine Run Campaign: Back to Field Fortifications

Under President Lincoln's incessant prodding, General Meade decided to attack Lee's Rappahannock positions. The weakest link in the line would be Kelly's Ford. That crossing and three others would be picketed by Doles' Brigade and the 44th Georgia on an alternating basis with other brigades and regiments of Rodes' Division. The division camped 1 1/2 miles west of the ford near Mountain Run and rotated two regiments at a time to watch Kelly's Ford.<sup>11</sup> A series of bluffs dominated the ford itself, causing two defensive maneuvers. First, the main defense would be established well inland. Second, Lee would maintain a bridgehead along the northern bank of the river to slow any attack and give time for the Confederates to react.<sup>12</sup>

General Meade moved his Army of the Potomac against the Rappahannock positions during the first week of November. The two-pronged thrust would strike at Kelly's Ford and at another point upriver. At noon on November 7, the Confederate picket force commander informed General Rodes that Federal infantry had replaced the cavalry usually around the ford. Rodes rushed to Kellysville, a hamlet on the western bank of the river, to see this indication of an attack for himself. He quickly called up the rest of his brigades and arrayed them in previously selected positions in woods west of Kellysville. The left flank rested on the river and ran to the Kellysville-Stevensburg Road on the right.<sup>13</sup>

The 44th Georgia skirmished with Federal troops that forced their way across the Rappahannock. The fighting lasted most of the afternoon, with the Federal force covering the construction of a pontoon bridge at the ford. The blue infantry did not gain more ground and the 44th Georgia suffered very few casualties from to artillery fire of Union batteries supporting the crossing.<sup>14</sup> However, shortly before darkness fell, the Federal right wing forced the bridgehead upriver. This placed the Army of Northern Virginia against a force outnumbering it almost two to one in the cleared, flat terrain between the Rappahannock and Rapidan.

Lee knew that he must move his troops very soon because wherever he elected to defend north of the Rapidan, Meade could turn his flank at will. He decided on a line protecting Culpepper Court House for the moment and his staff issued orders directing the shift to the new position. The orders reached the 44th Georgia in the cold, damp

woods camp they occupied sometime after midnight November 7. The movement to the new line took most of the night and lasted into the next morning.<sup>15</sup>

Using the darkness of November 8 as cover, the 44th Georgia withdrew with the rest of the army through Culpepper Court House. The march route turned south after passing through the town and made for the fords across the Rapidan where the men removed their shoes and rolled up their trousers preparatory to wading the river. The unseasonably cold weather made sloshing through the freezing knee-deep water unforgettable to the marching soldiers. One soldier likened the loss of feeling in his lower limbs to having his leg cut off.<sup>16</sup> The 44th Georgia picketed the same area it left a month earlier for the Bristoe Campaign. Generally, the regiment rotated duty covering Raccoon Ford during the period of November 9 through 13. After one day of rest, the regiment shifted down the river with the rest of Doles' Brigade and took up positions picketing Morton's Ford beginning on November 15.<sup>17</sup>

General Meade started the Mine Run Campaign by crossing the Rapidan between Lee's right flank and Fredericksburg beginning on the afternoon of November 26. Ironically, Meade used some of the same crossing points Hooker had used seven months before. Just as with Hooker, weather, misunderstood orders, and Confederate cavalry pickets prevented Meade from getting a favorable position unsuspected by Lee. Alerted by his scouts to a move he already suspected, Lee put his army on the road to meet the Federals. In the 44th Georgia camp, the officers directed the men to draw and cook three days' rations late in the evening of November 26. The weather was so cold that icicles formed on some men's beards.<sup>18</sup>

Rodes' Division used the Raccoon Ford Road (currently State Road 611) to leave its camps after midnight on November 26 and move to the ridgeline between Mine Run and Walnut Run north of the Orange Turnpike.<sup>19</sup> Doles' Brigade continued to picket the fords until relieved by cavalry and then marched quickly to join the rest of the division near Zoar Church and fortify a line facing east. At about 8:30 P.M. Rodes advanced to the east to feel for the Federals and found them at Locust Grove astride the Turnpike. Rodes formed a battleline fronting the Federal force and placed Doles' Brigade in reserve behind his left to connect with Johnson's Division when it arrived. At approximately noon, lead elements of Johnson's Division formed on Rodes' left, or north, flank. At nearly the same time some of the following brigades reported engaging Federal troops. Johnson examined the situation for a while and ordered an attack in the dense woods. Around 5 P.M., the 44th Georgia moved up along with the rest of the brigade to support Johnson's Division. Darkness ended the fight before the 44th Georgia could engage the Union soldiers.<sup>20</sup>

Doles' Brigade assisted in covering another army movement back to the west to take advantage of the higher ground running north-south behind Mine Run late in the evening of November 27. The brigade withdrew before daylight on November 28 and marched down the Orange Turnpike and across the stream. Once on more favorable terrain, the division faced about and dug in covering ground north of the roadway.<sup>21</sup> Rodes placed Doles' Brigade in reserve.<sup>22</sup> The 44th Georgia men entrenched their position as the Federals made some probing attacks on November 29 prior to scheduling a massive attack for the next day. After daybreak on November 30, the sight of the



fieldworks so thoroughly impressed Northern generals and privates alike that Meade called off his assault. He moved the Army of the Potomac back north of the Rapidan on December 1. Doles' Brigade moved after the withdrawing Federals the next morning and followed the retreat route until Germanna Ford over the Rapidan. On finding the Army of the Potomac gone, the brigade returned to its Morton's Ford bivouac on December 3, effectively ending the 44th Georgia Infantry's campaigning for 1863.<sup>23</sup>

Mine Run cost the 44th Georgia, according to sources at the time, three wounded<sup>24</sup> and one man missing.<sup>25</sup> Later records point to the action at Kelly's Ford costing the regiment one soldier killed in Company I and one each captured from Companies E and G. Private John L. Harkness suffered a gunshot wound on the picket line sometime on November 7 and died that day. The unlucky Henry County farmer had already been severely wounded at Ellerson's Mill the year before. Federal forces reported capturing Private Cicero Murchison of Company G and Private Reuben D. Edge of Company E on November 28. Murchison joined the regiment in early October of 1863 and had served little of his six weeks in the field. Perhaps his inexperience caused him to become disoriented during the retreat in the darkness of November 28 and stumble into the Union lines. He would die of disease less than two weeks later in a prison hospital in Washington.<sup>26</sup>

The 44th Georgia did not assume a winter camp posture immediately on Meade crossing the Rapidan. The regiment stayed in temporary camps overlooking fortifications that protected Morton's Ford, keeping ready to move up to the river at a moment's notice.<sup>27</sup> Only on the day after Christmas did the regiment occupy a permanent winter

camp about six miles east of Orange Court House just off the Orange Turnpike. The regiment christened the new camp "Camp Terrell."<sup>28</sup> The name is more than likely associated with a Dr. Terrell (or Terrill) who owned a house very near the camp with some of the men bivouacing on his property.<sup>29</sup> While at this camp, the 44th Georgia rotated with the other regiments of Doles' Brigade in picketing the now familiar Morton's Ford. Broken only by rotations on the picket line along the river, the regiment settled into a dull, but largely safe, winter routine.

### 1863 in Retrospect

As the 44th Georgia infantrymen looked back on 1863, they could rightly claim a banner year for the regiment. The thunderclap of success struck during May 2 at Chancellorsville bore distinct marks of the 44th Georgia on it. The regiment followed that impressive advance less than two months later on the first day at Gettysburg by materially assisting in the rout of the Federal forces north of the town.

The retreat from Gettysburg and the disappointment felt by Lee of the Bristoe and Mine Run Campaigns before the close of the year probably did very little to quell the regiment's confidence in itself. Neither, it seems, did the forty-three men killed or mortally wounded and the one hundred injured in combat.<sup>30</sup> The men and leaders alike took a certain pride in the blood spilled on fields of battle because that gruesome statistic in the Civil War often measured a unit's fighting prowess.

Cohesion in the 44th Georgia continued to be a strong factor during the regiment's second winter away from home as it had during the first year. Despite the ebb

and flow of some vicious fighting, Federal forces captured just twenty-seven soldiers from the 44th Georgia in twelve months. Of these, two-thirds of them lay wounded and unable to be moved during the retreat from Gettysburg. Only two men deserted, both of them doing so during the Gettysburg Campaign and on the march back into Virginia, an incredibly low figure. Both deserters signed the Oath of Allegiance, as did two of the wounded prisoners at Gettysburg, but it seemed the cohesion holding the regiment together remained strong.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Adams, 393.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 395-398.

<sup>3</sup>Martin F. Graham and George F. Skoch, *Mine Run: A Campaign of Lost Opportunities, October 21, 1863 - May 1, 1864*, 2nd ed. (Lynchburg: E.H. Howard, Inc., 1987), 2-3.

<sup>4</sup>*Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Volume 5 (Wilmington, North Carolina: Broadfoot Publishing, 1995), 593 (hereafter cited as *SOR*).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 593.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 594.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 595.

<sup>8</sup>Graham and Skoch, 1.

<sup>9</sup>*SOR*, 593.

<sup>10</sup>Key, 19 February 1899.

<sup>11</sup>*OR*, 29.2, 631.

<sup>12</sup>Graham and Skoch, 5-6.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>14</sup>Key, 18 February 1899.

<sup>15</sup>Graham and Skoch, 31-35.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Key, 18 February 1899.

<sup>18</sup>Graham and Skoch, 42-47.

<sup>19</sup>OR, 29.2, 876.

<sup>20</sup>Key, 23 February 1899.

<sup>21</sup>Graham and Skoch, 51.

<sup>22</sup>OR, 29.2, 878.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 617.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 876.

<sup>26</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>27</sup>Jackson, 11 December 1863.

<sup>28</sup>Key, 23 February 1899.

<sup>29</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 87, #4.

<sup>30</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

### PART III: 1864--THE LAST SEASON HOPE

#### CHAPTER 8

#### INTO THE WILDERNESS

##### Rest, Reflection, and Revivals Along the Rapidan

The 44th Georgia settled into a routine of rotating responsibility for watching the fords along the Rapidan during the first months of 1864. While not actually on the picket line, or furnishing the picket reserve force, the regiment spent its winter camp time at Camp Terrell northeast of Orange Court House.<sup>1</sup> A Dr. Terrell lived about six miles from the center of town along the north side of the Turnpike. In all probability the regiment, along with parts of Doles' Brigade and Rodes' Division, occupied camps on Dr. Terrell's property between the present crossroads communities of Nasons and Unionville.<sup>2</sup> The three regiments in Doles' Brigade shared the primary responsibility for picketing two fords on the Rapidan to the northeast of Orange Court House. Three regiments instead of four because the 21st Georgia moved to North Carolina in mid-January with Hoke's Division to augment hard pressed Confederate forces in that state. It would not return until May 20, and the three regiments would have to do the work of four.<sup>3</sup>

The 44th Georgia occupied security positions chiefly around Morton's Ford. Raccoon Ford lay approximately two miles above Morton's Ford and the regiment occasionally posted this location. For the first six weeks of the year, the men settled into a cold, dull routine. Huge rats in the farm buildings overlooking Morton's Ford provided some diversion, prompting the men to compare them to large squirrels.<sup>4</sup>

Occasionally, the dull routine could be punctuated by a reminder of the deadly business of war. Regimental Adjutant Richard Freeman, the former First Sergeant of Company E, encountered such a reminder at Raccoon Ford. The regiment moved up to occupy one of the picket camps overlooking the crossing during one night. The next morning Freeman walked down to the riverbank and stood watching the water rush over rocks in the middle of the stream. A puff of smoke blew from a deserted shack on the far bank and a bullet plowed into the ground at Freeman's feet. Freeman delayed only to call out to the Federal sharpshooter that it was a good shot before he quickly retreated up the bank to cover.<sup>5</sup>

Health-wise, the regiment suffered some losses to disease and a few men received discharges due to illness. However, it did not approach the inroads into the regiment's strength that sickness cut during 1862 or in early 1863. From examination of compiled service records for the officers in charge of the companies, the food issued by the commissary officers provided for a varied diet. Religion fed the mens' souls and it continued to play a significant role in keeping the cohesion in the 44th Georgia strong. A Baptist preacher visited Doles Brigade during the winter and found that the men had built a large amphitheater with hewn logs for bench seats expressly for religious services. A pulpit sat in the center flanked by platforms to hold torches for night services attended by hundreds of men. The minister held meetings every morning for soldiers to come and ask about worship. Prayer meetings supervised by the numerous lay preachers found in the ranks of the 44th Georgia went on every night. The minister reported that the prayer meeting and worship attendance in Doles' Brigade improved daily.<sup>6</sup>

This healthy situation existed despite the regiment being without an officially appointed military chaplain for some time since the resignation of Chaplain Thomas Beck about eighteen months previously. This is in a large part undoubtedly due to the fair representation of country preaches soldiering in the 44th Georgia. Regimental Chaplain A.M. Marshall of the 12th Georgia often assisted with services in the 44th Georgia because of this, and he spoke of the impressive number of men inquiring about salvation.<sup>7</sup> Before the war Marshall ministered to a congregation in Putnam County and doubtless knew many of the 44th Georgia's Company F very well.

No doubt that one of the chief messages presented, besides the necessity of personal salvation, was that the South's cause represented the correct, righteous side. Southern chaplains repeatedly drove this message home. With religion already playing such a powerful role in the everyday lives of the men prior to the Civil War, this message represented a powerful force in keeping the regiment together.

In late January, the 44th Georgia lost one of the chief motivating characters of the regiment. Major Key's wound from Gettysburg did not heal properly, and he could not take the field and campaign with the regiment. He received an order to report to Gordonsville, about nine miles southwest of Orange Court House, and assume command of a convalescent camp there. Captain John G. Blalock of Company G grew very ill in February, left the regiment, and spent time in this camp.<sup>8</sup>

Just as in the early months of 1863, the 44th Georgia would demonstrate its unit regimental and brigade cohesion in winter camp with a vast snowball fight on March 2, 1864. The day and night before, a huge snow of 12 to 14 inches blanketed the ground.

The 4th Georgia attacked the 44th Georgia's camp early in the morning. Lieutenant Colonel Beck led the 44th Georgia contingent on a counterattack that reached the 4th Georgia camp boundary. Colonel Willis of the 4th Georgia reinforced his troops and, as Beck could get very few reinforcements of his own, the 4th beat the 44th very badly and drove them from the fighting field. As soon as the fight finished, someone in the 44th Georgia's camp noticed skirmishers advancing with unfriendly intentions from the camps of Johnson's Division. The 4th and 44th united to oppose elements of four brigades of Virginians, Louisianans, and North Carolinians. General Doles joined the conflict at the head of the two regiments.<sup>9</sup>

Doles sent the brigade sharpshooter detachment out to greet the "enemy" and shouted for the 4th and 44th to stand their ground because he had a trick up his sleeve. Before assuming command of the snowballers, he sent an invitation to General Ramseur in an adjacent camp to flank the attackers when the opportunity presented itself. Johnson's Division came on with regimental battle flags flying and attacked into Doles' formation. Doles gave ground and the attackers came on at a rush and extended their formation. Just then Ramseur took the attackers in the flank. Johnson's Division crumbled and the defenders chased them back to their camps. Doles forbade the men to enter and wreck the camp facilities. Instead, he moved the men back to a favorable terrain position and posted some vedettes for security.<sup>10</sup>

Johnson bolstered his broken force with men from Walker's and Steuart's Brigades. Doles countered by sending for Battle's Brigade of Alabamians, who arrived just before the next attack. The struggle seesawed back and forth over the area between



the camps until nearly sundown. The Georgians and Alabamians captured three of the attackers' battleflags and several score of prisoners before being overwhelmed by sheer force of numbers. After the battle concluded, Doles exchanged the prisoners and colors for hats that his soldiers lost during the contest. The weary men retired to their camp huts and for days afterward discussed the gallantry of their officers in prosecuting the fight.<sup>11</sup>

Although intended to be a activity to relieve the boredom of winter camp, the snowball fight conclusively demonstrated the cohesion holding the 44th together. In the face of adversity and larger numbers, the regiment fought throughout the day. The snowball affair also demonstrated the bond between the 4th and 44th Georgia in their 20th month of war together.

As had been the case exactly a year before, the most leadership turmoil came with the warming weather and certain prospect of a coming campaign against a vast Federal army. Captain Blalock worsened at the convalescent camp in Gordonsville, causing Major Key to forward him to better accommodations at a hospital in Charlottesville.<sup>12</sup> Blalock failed to rally and died from tuberculosis there on March 30. He had commanded Company G competently for fifteen months. On April 18, Lieutenant Joseph A. Edmondson moved up to the captaincy of Company G having led the outfit for some time during Blalocks's absence. Edmondson came from a very prominent slave-owning family in Fayette County and his brother Thomas had served in the company before retiring due to wounds.<sup>13</sup> The unit did not elect a lieutenant to replace Edmondson, most likely because the low strength of the company would not justify it.

Even with the changes in leadership, the 44th Georgia marched out of camps in early May behind experienced leaders. Four of the company commanders had led their companies nearly two years and most of the recently elevated captains commanded their respective units for parts of Chancellorsville or Gettysburg, or both. The men in the ranks liked, respected, and trusted them. This translated into a bond between the leaders and the led that the regiment's battle experiences sorely tested in the coming months.

### The Wilderness: A New Kind of Fighting

The Rapidan River flowed as the only natural obstacle separating the Confederate and Federal forces throughout the winter and spring of 1864. In March, Ulysses S. Grant accepted with his lieutenant general's commission the responsibility for all the Federal armies in the field. He located his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac later that month. Grant planned offensives against all the Confederate armies and key cities for the coming summer. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia formed the principal target for Grant's campaign in Virginia. Grant understood that without the destruction of Lee's army, any capture of a city or territory held little meaning.<sup>14</sup>

The 44th Georgia Infantry neared the end of winter camp at Camp Terrell with companies averaging 57 men, and a regimental strength of approximately 580 men.<sup>15</sup> This probably represented the regiment's highest battle strength of the war and every man would be needed because it would be marching to a battle for survival. Survival of nation, unit, and person would all hinge on how well the regiments and brigades under Lee fought in the next crucial months. As Lee suspected, Grant planned to cross over the

Rapidan, quickly negotiate the Wilderness roads, and emerge in open country on the Confederate right flank. Grant expected to clear the Wilderness before Lee could assemble his three corps from along the Rapidan line and force a battle. Accordingly, Grant started the Army of the Potomac in motion in the first hours of May 4.<sup>16</sup>

Two Union corps crossed pontoon bridges at Ely's and Germanna Fords, followed by more troops later in the morning. As he did the year before against Hooker, Lee quickly gained timely and accurate intelligence of his adversary's movements. He knew by 9 A.M. that morning that a large part of the Federal army had crossed to his side of the river.<sup>17</sup> Word went out to the divisions and brigades to cook marching rations and prepare to move.<sup>18</sup>

Since Ewell's Second Corps occupied camps closest to the crossing sites, it moved first at about noon on May 4. Ewell's divisions rapidly abandoned their winter camps and took up a line of march along the Orange Turnpike heading toward the fords some twelve miles away.<sup>19</sup> Their commander expected to strike the elongated Federal columns along the Germanna Plank Road-Brock Road route in flank before the bluecoated infantrymen could get out of the Wilderness. The Confederates bivouacked for the night in the vicinity of the Locust Grove crossroads.<sup>20</sup> The 44th Georgia camped for the night about 1 1/2 miles to the south of the crossroads itself near a tributary of Mine Run.<sup>21</sup>

The 44th Georgia marched toward ground it knew very well. The men felt another battle fought on the Chancellorsville battlefield promised success. However, it would be a question of time if Ewell could close with the Federals in the heart of the

Wilderness. Aiming to find, fix, and fight the Federals, Ewell had his three divisions on the road just after 5 A.M. on May 5 in a thick blanket of fog. Rodes' Division made the movement with Doles' Brigade second in the division order of march. Commissary officers issued no rations that morning and the men ate whatever they had prepared the day before and carried in their haversacks.<sup>22</sup> Tactical dispositions executed later in the day suggest that the 44th Georgia trailed the other two regiments in the brigade.<sup>23</sup>

About 11 A.M., Ewell's scouts reported a body of blueclad troops crossing the Turnpike from north to south to his distant front. This sighting determined the scene of combat for the next two days. The Federal troops in General Warren's Fifth Corps of four divisions turned and made preparations to attack down the Turnpike. Typical of the Wilderness, the wooded areas featured thick secondary growth and underbrush. Farm tracks supplemented the scarce road network. A few farm clearings dotted the landscape and small streams cut through the woods.<sup>24</sup> The streams meandered here and there through briar-filled swamps. This incredibly restricted terrain complicated grasp of the true tactical situation for both sides, but especially hindered the battle line formation movements of any attacker. This posed an initial advantage to the defending Confederates.

Ewell advanced Virginians of Jones' Brigade to cover a large bramble-covered clearing to the right of the road known locally as Saunder's Field. Hurrying to form a line of battle south of the road, Rodes placed Battle's Brigade of Alabama troops immediately beside the Turnpike with their left flank adjacent to the roadbed. Doles took his three regiments south of the Battle and east past the right, or south, flank of

Alabamians. Doles began forming his men in sight of, but not physical contact with, south of the right flank of Jones' Brigade.<sup>25</sup> This disposition did not fit with Ewell's tactical plan. He intended that both Battle and Doles occupy a second line of battle supporting Jones. Instead, Doles placed his brigade in the front line with only skirmishers between him and the Federals. This alignment probably confused Ewell's interpretation of events later in the day as the Federals attacked.<sup>26</sup>

In approximately the next half hour Doles' completed his movement, quickened no doubt by the firing he could hear coming from skirmishing in Saunder's Field only some 150 yards distant to his north. He aligned the brigade with the 4th Georgia on the left, 12th Georgia in the center, and the 44th Georgia on the right. The 44th Georgia's right flank ended in the vicinity of the Mill Branch (now known as North Wilderness Run) streambed some 600 yards northwest of the Higgerson farm clearings. The regiments posted skirmishers to their front and waited.<sup>27</sup>

They would not have long to wait because their battle line sat squarely in the path of an imminent Union attack oriented down the Orange Turnpike with at least seven brigades. Before noon, 44th Georgia skirmishers near Mill Branch engaged elements of the 147th New York and 149th Pennsylvania. The two regiments formed the vanguard of elements of three brigades of General James Wadsworth's Fourth Division, Fifth Corps advancing in the wooded terrain south of the Turnpike. The Union movement generally took a more or less western direction to pass north of the Higgerson farm. The rifle fire of the Confederate regimental skirmishing lines temporarily drove the two Union regiments to ground in the dense thickets. The 149th Pennsylvania soon withdrew to the

south, but the 147th New York remained stationary and apparently out of sight in the dense woods somewhere beyond Doles.<sup>28</sup>

This brief action narrowly averted development of a simultaneous assault from two directions, because Cutler's Iron Brigade of six Federal regiments and one battalion advanced about that time into the less dense forest immediately south of Saunder's Field. Another regiment, the 150th Pennsylvania, separated from its parent brigades and joined the advance. Cutler's attack met with quick success, breaking Jones' Brigade, killing Jones himself, and driving the remnants back into Battle's lines. Several Union units pursued the retreating Confederates deeper into the woods following a line that would take them just north of Doles.<sup>29</sup>

The 24th Michigan pursued so quickly that it ran past the 4th Georgia's line that had been bent back at a right angle to the brigade line. All of Doles' regiments had stayed prone, patiently waiting for the 150th Pennsylvania to advance into an ambush. The 4th Georgia smashed a surprise volley into the 24th Michigan and the 12th and 44th stood and fired a point-blank volley into the faces of the 150th Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvanians held firm and traded volley for volley. This accurate Federal fire wounded six men in Company C,<sup>30</sup> and it eventually accounted for most of the losses in killed and wounded that the 44th Georgia suffered in the Wilderness thickets.<sup>31</sup>

The blue line surged forward. The Georgians' line gave some ground in the face of the Federal assault and firepower. Private Benjamin Langford, one of two Langford brothers serving in Company C, occupied a spot out on the skirmish line. He did not

retreat with the skirmishers to the main 44th Georgia line. Instead, he hid as the Federal battle line passed him and for a short time shots from both sides endangered him.<sup>32</sup>

About one hundred yards to the rear of the first position, the majority of the 44th Georgia reformed under fire with other parts of Doles' Brigade and countercharged to regain the ground lost.<sup>33</sup> As the 44th retook its initial position and advanced past it, Private Langford fell in with the oncoming line without a scratch.<sup>34</sup> Joseph B. Langford, Benjamin's brother, did not enjoy similar good fortune. A bullet wound permanently disabled his right arm.<sup>35</sup>

Some men from Doles' Brigade did not reform and counterattack. The wounded and some stragglers moved through the woods and reached the Turnpike. The advance elements of Gordon's Brigade saw them as they hurried to check the Union threat. Gordon moved his regiments into the woods south of the road and in a direction closely following the Mill Branch streambed. The advance passed just south of the 44th Georgia as it fought to hold on to its recently recaptured ground.<sup>36</sup>

As Gordon's attack went forward to restore the situation, Doles attacked into the exposed left flank and rear of Cutler as Battle and his Alabama troops charged the Federals in front. The sudden counterattack stunned the 6th Wisconsin under Colonel Rufus Dawes and pushed it from the field in disorder.<sup>37</sup> Dawes reported later that this attack cost the 6th Wisconsin over fifty casualties, among them one major and two company commanders shot down.<sup>38</sup> The 44th Georgia almost certainly inflicted a portion of these losses.

Gordon's attack developed fully into a seam between two Federal brigades. Part of Doles' Brigade, including the 44th Georgia, followed the right flank of Gordon and steadily pushed the Federals out of the woods surrounding the Higgerson farm clearing. By mid-afternoon, the immediate threat to Ewell's front evaporated. Doles took up a line in the western edge of woods north of the Higgerson property with his left flank connected to elements of a Confederate brigade south of Saunder's Field. His regiments kept skirmishers out front and dueled with their Federal counterparts until nightfall.<sup>39</sup>

Throughout the skirmishing late in the afternoon, the 44th Georgia along with other regiments in the line erected breastworks and scooped out trenches, piling the dirt up as cover. By 5 P.M. this line north of the Higgerson farm neared completion as a hasty fieldwork. In the late afternoon and early hours of darkness, the smoldering forest undergrowth caught fire in many areas, burning the seriously wounded between the opposing lines to death and charring the already dead corpses. The men slept in their field fortifications with rifles at their sides during the night.<sup>40</sup>

The 44th Georgia and Doles' Brigade fought hard on May 5. One testament to the intensity of combat in the 44th Georgia's immediate area is the 20,000 rounds of ammunition required by Wadsworth's depleted Federal division on the afternoon of May 5 before it could be shifted to fight elsewhere.<sup>41</sup>

By upsetting a segment of Wadsworth's attack around 1 P.M., Doles and his three regiments prevented the Confederate line south of the Turnpike from receiving the full brunt of the Union attack. And, by holding or regaining his ground early in the afternoon, Doles allowed Gordon's counterattack to go in more to the south of the Turnpike. Instead



of meeting two or more brigades head-on, Gordon assaulted into a gap between advancing Federal brigades and stopped the threat to Ewell.

Union forces probed Ewell's line throughout May 6 with a view toward preventing him from withdrawing units and reinforcing the major battle developing along the Plank Road two miles to the south. Doles' area received several of these attacks beginning before 6:30 A.M. from Colonel William McCandles' and Colonel Joseph Fisher's brigades of Pennsylvania Reserves, old adversaries of the 44th Georgia from Ellerson's Mill almost two years before. The most serious attacks came before 10 A.M. and the 44th Georgia turned the tables on the Pennsylvania Reserves. Both the attacking brigades suffered nearly 100 casualties in the Wilderness fighting, most of them on this morning.<sup>42</sup> The probes caused Doles very few casualties and gained no ground.

Two accounts have the 4th and 44th Georgia withdrawn from the line and moved north of the Turnpike late in the day on May 6 to support Gordon's attack on the Union left flank that evening. After the attack ended, the regiments apparently returned to their respective positions north of the Higginson farm after dark.<sup>43</sup> The men continued to strengthen their fieldworks during the night.

#### Deaths and Wounds From an Opponent Unseen

Third Sergeant John Anderson of Company K took a Federal bullet in his right shoulder. He could not walk or crawl back to the Confederate lines and Federal soldiers, probably Maryland troops from Colonel Andrew Denison's Third Brigade of the Fifth Corps, captured him and evacuated him the next day to the corps hospital. From there

Anderson went on to a permanent hospital near Washington. Complications developed with his injury and he lingered for over three weeks before he died on May 27,<sup>44</sup> leaving a wife and at least five children.<sup>45</sup> His captors buried him in a soldiers' cemetery on the grounds of Robert E. Lee's prewar home in Arlington. It eventually became Arlington National Cemetery.<sup>46</sup>

Company K's Asbury L. Bryan did not have time to marry and leave a widow or children. The nineteen-year-old private died in the fighting on May 5. He left two brothers still serving with the 44th Georgia.<sup>47</sup> Corporal John R. Jackson of Company A suffered a gunshot injury in his right shoulder on May 5 that paralyzed his right arm. He had been captured at Gettysburg, exchanged, and rejoined the regiment to receive his corporal's promotion. This injury ended his war service and disabled his arm for the rest of his life.<sup>48</sup>

Company C soldier James A. Griffith also received a wound in his arm. It mangled it so seriously that it required amputation, resulting in his disability discharge the next month. Sergeant William J. Whitehead, also from Company C, lost his left leg on May 8 as a result of wounds suffered May 5.<sup>49</sup> Private William P. Bearden, another Company C soldier, seemed luckier than his two comrades, at least at first. Bearden took a rifle bullet in his right arm during the fighting May 5. Surgeons initially took out a portion of the bone between his shoulder and elbow. He suffered a secondary hemorrhage, forcing surgeons to remove his arm at the shoulder joint. He could serve no longer.<sup>50</sup>

Because of so many brothers serving together in the 44th Georgia, it became virtually inevitable that some would be hit in the same battle. Of the three Christian brothers that started service as privates with Company D, two remained in the ranks at the Wilderness and both received wounds. Rifle fire wounded Claiborne A. Christian in the leg and his brother William M. Christian took a slug in his head. Both recovered after a lengthy period, but only Claiborne would return to service with the 44th Georgia.<sup>51</sup>

### Stalemate in the Woods

The 44th Georgia proved itself competent at what a Michigan soldier fighting in and around Doles' position described as "a new kind of murder. . . rough and tumble all along the line."<sup>52</sup> Opposing battle lines ebbed and flowed toward each other from as little as twenty yards away. The tight cohesion of the regiment held the 44th Georgia together in places where few soldiers could see either flank of their own company, let alone the whole regimental line. A soldier who thus far had fought together for two years trusted the man next to him to hold fast. Commanders trusted brother commanders to fight it out and not desert the units on the left and right.

May 7 in Doles' sector remained relatively quiet, provoking no complaints from the 44th Georgia soldiers.<sup>53</sup> The regiment took stock of its losses. It left its camp on May 4 with about 580 men under arms and reported 6 killed in the fighting. Thirty-six fell wounded and five of them would soon die of their injuries. Companies I and K reported one man each missing.<sup>54</sup> If the estimate of regimental strength is nearly correct, this resulted in an approximate casualty rate of under 8 percent. This signified by far the

lowest 44th Georgia casualty rate in a pitched battle so far in the war. Fighting defensively in the forest and preparing fieldworks undoubtedly held the casualty rate down, a lesson the soldiers rapidly embraced.

### The Fight for Survival Moves South

Heavy losses on each side and restricted terrain produced a stalemate in the Wilderness. Both Grant and Lee decided not to assault each other again in the tangled forest. But Grant, unlike the previous Union commanders, determined to press on. He chose Spotsylvania Court House, southeast by about ten miles from his army's positions, as the next objective for his campaign. Grant had several reasons for moving toward Spotsylvania. One of them stood out: if Grant got to Spotsylvania first, he put the Union army solidly between Lee and Richmond. Lee would then have to attack the superior force or try to out-march them to save the Confederate capital. At 6:30 A.M. on May 7, Grant's headquarters issued the orders directing the Federal corps to prepare for a night march beginning that evening with Spotsylvania Court House as the destination. The Federal Fifth and Sixth Corps would leave their positions fronting Ewell's area soon after dark covered by a picket screen.<sup>55</sup>

Shortly after Grant issued his orders for the movement to Spotsylvania, Lee received indications of Federal cavalry movements southeast of the Wilderness. More information trickled in to him during the morning, yet he remained unsure of Grant's exact intentions. By 7 P.M. that evening, having decided Grant indeed intended moving past the Confederate right flank, Lee issued his orders. He told General Richard

Anderson, the new commander of the First Corps, to withdraw his troops from the line, rest them, and prepare to leave for Spotsylvania no later than 3 A.M. the following morning. He directed Ewell to extend his corps to the right and be ready to follow Anderson if the Federals moved from his front.<sup>56</sup>

Around midnight, the movement south began for Doles' Brigade. As soon as North Carolinians of Daniel's Brigade on the 44th Georgia's flank shifted to the right, the 44th followed. The officers instructed the men to follow the troops on their right along the rear of the breastworks and make no noise. The movement jerked along slowly, stopping frequently only to start again minutes later. Between 3 and 4 .M. Ewell halted his men for a rest. By this time, the 44th Georgia stood in the neighborhood of the Chewning farm north of the Orange Plank Road.<sup>57</sup>

Ewell received instructions from Lee to take the Shady Grove Church Road from Parker's Store on the Orange Plank Road and move to Shady Grove Church and then to the Catharpin Road. Rodes' Division moved out at 8 A.M., with Doles' Brigade third in line following those of Ramseur and Daniel. In the meantime, Anderson's troops reached Spotsylvania, secured the crossroads from Union cavalry, and deployed to receive attacks from the Federal Fifth and Sixth Corps. Soldiers marching with Ewell's column remembered this march as one of the most unpleasant ones of the war. Parched by lack of recent rain and the intense heat, the roads turned to fine dust stirred up by thousands of marching feet. Sections of the route passed through stands of still smoldering timber, adding smoke and more heat to the choking dust.<sup>58</sup>

The column passed by Shady Grove Church about midday and continued on to the east. Here, a message from Anderson reached Ewell asking that the Second Corps units hurry to support him in fighting off two corps of Union troops attacking northwest of the Spotsylvania crossroads at Laurel Hill. The march pace intensified and crossed the Potomac River at the Block House Bridge just before 6 P.M. to the rumble of gunfire in the distance.<sup>59</sup> Shortly after crossing the river the tired column turned north on the Old Court House Road and closed up with Anderson's troops.

Rodes aligned the division east of the Brock Road-Old Court House road intersection on Anderson's right with the brigades of Ramseur, Battle, Daniel, and Doles west to east.<sup>60</sup> The formation of Doles' Brigade probably put the 44th Georgia on the left connecting with Daniel's Brigade. As soon as the regiment stopped moving, the men began to dig and pile up fencerails, logs, and dirt for cover.

The Federal Fifth and Sixth Corps began a combined attack down the Brock Road shortly after 6 P.M. while Rodes' brigades completed their movement to close up on Anderson's right flank. Ramseur's and Battle's units attacked the Federal forces to their front and Daniel and Doles advanced to cover their flanks. Although Daniel and Battle tangled significantly with the Federals,<sup>61</sup> the 44th Georgia experienced little contact with the enemy, losing one soldier mortally wounded from Company B.<sup>62</sup>

With the woods and oncoming darkness disorganizing his attacking brigades, Rodes withdrew them while enough light remained to place them in a defending position. After nightfall, Rodes adjusted the lines to take advantage of the terrain and ordered the

brigade commanders to entrench. Barely 500 yards distant, the Union troops did the same.<sup>63</sup>

At daybreak on May 9, the 44th Georgia soldiers got a clear look at the area fronting their section of line. They dug in the night before on a section of slightly elevated ground overlooking a cleared field. While most of Rodes' line occupied sections of woodline, Doles' line went in entirely in the open. Some sources mention a tiny creek in the field. A moderately thick section of woods sat about two hundred yards from the fieldworks to the north beyond the small creek. The earthworks interrupted a narrow farm lane that stretched out and entered the woods before continuing on to the Shelton farm. The men put logs on the earth mounds, piled up more dirt, and cut trees and brush to construct abatis in front of the line.<sup>64</sup>

Skirmishers entered the woods in front to warn of any Federal attack. Later in the day, as the artillery of the Federal Sixth Corps began throwing shells at the line, the men erected log traverses for additional protection.<sup>65</sup> A traverse consisted of a section of logs or earthworks erected back at a right angle from the main line. It shielded the troops in the trenches from flanking fire by infantry or artillery and made it difficult for an attacker to exploit a penetration of the trenchlines.

Five battalions of Confederate artillery supported Ewell's Second Corps during this campaign. Hardaway's Battalion sent Smith's Virginia Battery of four guns late in the morning to Doles' area to strengthen the line. Gunners emplaced the four cannons to the left of the 44th Georgia and the point where the Shelton farm lane entered the fieldworks.<sup>66</sup> The Confederate line occupied an elevation which, Ewell later reported,

could not be abandoned to the Federal forces because it offered too many advantages for the opposing artillery if used as a position.<sup>67</sup> As a result, Ewell defended a large salient oriented generally north. The projection measured a half-mile north-south and roughly three quarters of a mile west-east at its base. Doles defended a portion on the northwest where the salient fieldworks angled back down to the southwest. The Confederate soldiers defending the salient called it the “Mule Shoe” after its horseshoe shape.

General Grant wanted to find a spot where an assault could be made on favorable terms and directed his commanders to search for such a point. Union skirmishers advanced again and again trying to get close enough to Ewell’s line to determine its location and strength. The 44th skirmishers spent most of the day in the woods 200 yards in front of the works successfully resisting Union attempts to drive them out. Smith’s Battery actively supported the skirmishers and caused some casualties in the Sixth Corps during the daylight hours.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Key, 23 February 1899.

<sup>2</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 87, #4.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas, 358-362.

<sup>4</sup>Key, 16 February 1899.

<sup>5</sup>Freeman.

<sup>6</sup>J. William Jones, *Christ in the Camp or Religion in the Confederate Army* (Atlanta: Martin and Hoyt, 1870), 333.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 333, 520.

<sup>8</sup>Key, 9 March 1899.



<sup>9</sup>Reese, 19 April 1864.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Key, 19 March 1899.

<sup>13</sup>Henderson, 796-799.

<sup>14</sup>Edward Steere, *The Wilderness Campaign* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Co., 1960; reprint, Gaithersburg, Maryland: Olde Soldier Books, Inc., 1987), 14-16.

<sup>15</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>16</sup>Steere, 36-39.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 73-74.

<sup>18</sup>Thomas, 477.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 412.

<sup>20</sup>Steere, 86.

<sup>21</sup>Thomas, 76.

<sup>22</sup>Gordon C. Rhea, *The Battles for Spotsylvania Court House and the Road to Yellow Tavern, May 7-12, 1864* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 123.

<sup>23</sup>John Michael Priest, *Nowhere To Run: The Wilderness, May 4th and 5th, 1864* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: White Mane Publishing Company, Inc., 1995), 84.

<sup>24</sup>Steere, 144-148.

<sup>25</sup>Priest, 36-37.

<sup>26</sup>Rhea, 125.

<sup>27</sup>Priest, 36-37.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 57-87.

- <sup>29</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>30</sup>Jackson, 11 May 1864.
- <sup>31</sup>Henderson, 716-838.
- <sup>32</sup>Jackson, 11 May 1864.
- <sup>33</sup>Freeman.
- <sup>34</sup>Jackson, 23 May 1864.
- <sup>35</sup>Henderson, 757.
- <sup>36</sup>Priest, 86-87.
- <sup>37</sup>Ibid., 107-108.
- <sup>38</sup>Rufus R. Dawes, *Service with the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteers* (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Bookshop, 1991), 251-262.
- <sup>39</sup>Steere. 178.
- <sup>40</sup>Rhea, 276.
- <sup>41</sup>Alan D. Gaff, *On Many a Bloodstained Field; Four Years in the Iron Brigade* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1996), 334.
- <sup>42</sup>OR, 36.1, 158
- <sup>43</sup>Thomas, 76, 478.
- <sup>44</sup>Henderson, 716-838.
- <sup>45</sup>1860 Census.
- <sup>46</sup>Henderson, 829.
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid., 830.
- <sup>48</sup>Ibid., 733.
- <sup>49</sup>Ibid., 751-763.

<sup>50</sup>*MSHCW*, vol. 10, 601.

<sup>51</sup>Henderson, 766.

<sup>52</sup>Donald L. Smith, *The Twenty-Fourth Michigan of the Iron Brigade* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Stackpole Company, 1962), 184.

<sup>53</sup>*OR*, 36.1, 1070-1075.

<sup>54</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>55</sup>William D. Matter, *If It Takes All Summer: The Battle for Spotsylvania* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 2-40.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 75-76.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 75-87.

<sup>59</sup>Rhea, 81.

<sup>60</sup>Matter, 87.

<sup>61</sup>Rhea, 84-85.

<sup>62</sup>Henderson, 740-751.

<sup>63</sup>Matter, 94-95.

<sup>64</sup>Thomas, 478.

<sup>65</sup>Matter, 106.

<sup>66</sup>*OR*, 36.1, 1037.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, 1071.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, 667.

## CHAPTER 9

### PRELUDE TO THE BLOODY ANGLE

#### Brink of Oblivion

The bloody game between the skirmishers continued on into the night of May 9. Two companies from the 49th Pennsylvania and two companies from the 119th Pennsylvania opened a running battle with Doles' men after midnight. The Pennsylvanians in three hours of fighting pushed the most advanced Confederate skirmishers back onto a supporting line in the woods and then out of the woods entirely. Doles then sortied a relief force from his trenches which drove the Federals back about 250 yards. The Pennsylvanians regrouped and attacked again. This time the Federal skirmishers took and held a position of piled up fence rails about seventy-five yards back into the woodline from Doles' fieldworks.<sup>1</sup>

Union leaders approached close enough to observe sections of Ewell's trenches after the morning of May 10. Doles' section of fieldworks received what later turned out to be some very unwelcome attention from Captain Ranald McKenzie, an engineer.<sup>2</sup> It was McKenzie who originally examined Doles' section of line, selected the site for a possible attack, and proposed it to the Union leadership. The Sixth Corps commander, General Horatio Wright, appointed Colonel Emory Upton, commanding the First Division's Second Brigade, to lead the attack by twelve selected regiments on Ewell's line. Colonel Upton believed that fieldworks could be successfully attacked with a narrow, concentrated column of regiments. Once the leading edge of the assault column

breached the enemy line, the following regiments would assault through the gap and take the enemy's trenches in the flank and rear.<sup>3</sup> Upton eagerly accepted the assignment and made preparations for a reconnaissance of the defensive line and approaches to it. He assembled the regimental commanders for a personal reconnaissance to view the point of attack. It is extremely likely that these officers viewed the line from the vantage point taken by the Pennsylvania skirmishers during the night.

The reconnaissance convinced Upton that the part of the line held by Doles could be assaulted under circumstances then in place. Namely, he could get a concentrated assault column close to the trenches with a good chance of remaining unobserved. Based on the reconnaissance and recommendations from Upton, Wright approved the attack for the afternoon of May 10<sup>4</sup> and allowed Upton time to review the regiments in the attack that would test his theory. The Third Brigade from the First Division would provide the 5th Wisconsin, 6th Maine, and 49th and 119th Pennsylvania, the latter two regiments active in the skirmishing the night before. The Second Division furnished the 2nd, 5th, and 6th Vermont from its Second Brigade and 43rd and 77th New York from its Third Brigade. Upton's own brigade from the First Division rounded out the assault force with the 5th Maine, 121st New York, and the 96th Pennsylvania.<sup>5</sup>

The assault preceded a planned attack of General Mott's Third Brigade from the Third Division, Second Corps on the northern apex of the salient. Wright set the time for both attacks at 5 P.M. However, due to a confusing series of orders and misunderstandings, Mott's attack did not support Upton or begin at the same time.<sup>6</sup> In addition to Mott, Upton counted on a detailed force of eighteen guns from three veteran

artillery batteries as well as two mortars from the Sixth Corps artillery brigade to fire specifically in support of his attack. Battery E, 1st Rhode Island Light Artillery with Battery A, 1st Massachusetts Light Artillery and the 1st Battery, New York Light Artillery all received instructions for firing immediately before the attack. All of them saw previous action in the Wilderness and remained active around Spotsylvania since May 8. The guns would fire for the 10 minutes immediately preceding Upton's assault.<sup>7</sup>

With roughly 4,500 men in 12 regiments, Upton decided on the formation of the assault column with his brigade in the front rank. Facing the Confederate lines with the top of the page being a southeasterly direction, the alignment would be as in table 4:<sup>8</sup>

Table 4. Formation of the Upton's Assault Column, May 10, 1864			
First rank:	5th Maine	96th Pennsylvania	121st New York
Second Rank:	5th Wisconsin	6th Maine	49th Pennsylvania
Third Rank:	119th Pennsylvania	77th New York	43rd New York
Fourth Rank:	6th Vermont	5th Vermont	2nd Vermont

Upton issued each regimental commander a set of detailed instructions. First, the regiments in the front rank would carry rifles loaded with percussion caps in place. All the other regiments were to advance with rifles loaded, but not capped. Apparently Upton expressed concern that men in the attacking waves would stop and fire at the defenders and when they gained the trenches, would have an unloaded weapon with which to defend themselves.<sup>9</sup> Each infantryman carried a rifle with a fixed bayonet for the certainty of close-in fighting.<sup>10</sup>

After getting into the fieldworks, two units in the front rank were to turn to the right and attack the four guns of Smith's Battery supporting the line. The second wave of three regiments were to allow an interval of only ten feet between them and the leading regiments. After clearing the trenches at the point of attack, the second wave was to direct a steady fire to the front. The third line of three more regiments would follow and occupy the trenchline and await for situational developments.<sup>11</sup> Vermonters in the fourth and final line were to move to the edge of the woods and stay ready to move up in support. As a precaution, Upton told the Vermont commander to be prepared to form a battleline and fire obliquely to the left to protect the left flank of the assault regiments. Above all, Upton emphasized that the officers in the commands were to continue to repeat the command "Forward" until the attack lines reached the trenches.<sup>12</sup>

### A Tide of Blue

Skirmishers from the 65th New York vigorously engaged Doles' skirmishers in the woods immediately fronting the fieldworks from around 4 P.M. onward. In approximately an hour, the 65th ejected all the Confederate skirmishers protecting Doles' front from the woodline. This covered Upton's eventual movement of the regiments forward from the Shelton farm along the lane and into their assault position. Although some stray rifle shots later struck the regiments, the 65th New York successfully screened the operation and prevented the Confederate leadership from developing correct ideas of Upton's intentions.<sup>13</sup>

The attack was delayed for an hour, but orders announcing the delay did not reach all the supporting batteries. One opened fire at 5 P.M., then received directions to continue at a slow rate of fire to mask the delay. Although not a bombardment in the true sense, it helped to divert Confederate attention away from the woods immediately in their front. The Federal gunners turned in some accurate shooting that impressed the Federal soldiers in the assault columns.<sup>14</sup> Smith's Battery periodically replied to this fire by shooting at the Federal battery positions, but evidently Captain Smith did not or could not see the assault columns forming up in the woods.<sup>15</sup>

The Federal regiments formed up in an open space in front of the Federal fieldworks, filed quickly down Shelton's lane, and took up their assault positions. Upton, based on his reconnaissance, decided to use the Shelton farm lane as a center guide for the assault.<sup>16</sup> He placed the right four regiments west of the Shelton farm lane facing south and the eight remaining ones to their right east of the lane and also facing south.<sup>17</sup> The woods hid most of the formation and the regiments took up prone positions once in place for more cover and concealment.<sup>18</sup> The 2nd Vermont in the last rank had the added benefit of a ravine for cover.<sup>19</sup> Since the 44th Georgia manned the area where the Shelton lane entered the fieldworks, it held the section of the line where Upton's heaviest blow would fall.

Ever since the 65th New York drove in Doles' skirmishers about 5 P.M., Ewell suspected some activity along his front. The firing by one Federal battery consistently between 5 and 6 P.M. made him doubly suspicious. He sent orders to Doles to regain his skirmish line at any cost. Unaccountably, Doles delayed in carrying out this order and



when Upton attacked only a few pickets stood about twenty to thirty yards in front of his works.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, Colonel Upton sent his preparatory signal that the time had come to attack. The artillery batteries stepped up their fire for the last ten minutes before Upton jumped off.<sup>21</sup> After ten minutes it abruptly ceased, and Upton's formation burst out of the woods and rushed forward with a loud cheer. Walker's Brigade of Virginia troops dug in on Doles right fired into the left side of the massive assault column. This fire caused some of the lead Union regiments to veer to the right and add to the overmatch at the point of the attack.<sup>22</sup>

Completely caught by surprise, the Georgians along the trenches fired individually instead of by unit volleys. This rifle fire and some canister rounds fired by Smith's Battery knocked down about half of the front rank of the assault column.<sup>23</sup> It did not stem the tide to any noticeable degree. After two, and at most three, shots per man from the defenders, the wave of blue broke over the entrenchments. The first Federal infantrymen covered the short distance to the fieldworks in less than a minute and climbed up on the work, only to be shot down. With so many attackers, the defenders could not stop them all. The full weight of Upton's men surged up and over the earthworks for a brief period of savage hand-to-hand combat with the 44th, 12th, and 4th Georgia.<sup>24</sup>

Lieutenant Levi J. Smith of the 44th Georgia's Company I recorded that the main point of the assault broke over the point held by the 4th Georgia. After quickly punching through the 4th Georgia, according to Smith, the Federals swarmed behind the 12th and

44th Georgia. This caused all three of Doles' regiments to fight in more than one direction at one time.<sup>25</sup>

It is clear that wherever Upton's men entered the works, the soldiers of the 44th Georgia had few choices. First, retreat to the supporting trench line to their rear. Second, fight it out with the attackers. Third, surrender. Few could see a path to retreat and over 200 men stayed where they stood to fight it out in groups of two and three. Some of the 44th Georgia retreated about 80 yards back from the earthworks to rally around the regimental color-bearer. Private Thomas J. Dingler carried the battleflag at Sharpsburg, and he inspired many of the 44th Georgia men around him then and now. His banner attracted the attention of the third Federal assault wave as it rolled over the earthworks and fought to expand the lodgment. Dingler fought hand to hand with several Federal soldiers from the 43rd New York who grabbed at the staff and wrenched it away. As Dingler hung on to the fabric, his attackers bayoneted him and tore the flag from his grasp, leaving ragged, bloody fragments in his hands. Witnesses viewing his body after the battle counted fourteen bayonet wounds.<sup>26</sup>

Federals spilling over the fieldworks fired at George W. Beavers, Michael C. Hempley, and William C. Huie. The three men were friends in Company D who clustered together as they fought. The shots wounded Huie, but missed Beavers and Hempley. Hempley capped his rifle and fired. His weapon now empty, Hempley saw the futility in resting the large number of Federals literally among them and urged the other two to "throw down our guns and surrender, our lives are worth something." The three men dropped their rifles and raised their hands. Federal soldiers closed around them and

demanded that they drop any military equipment they carried. Beavers forgot about the cartridge box he wore, prompting a blue-coated soldier to aim his rifle at him. A Federal officer intervened, saving Beavers, and turned the three over to the supporting regiments as prisoners of war.<sup>27</sup>

More attackers came over the earthworks to join in the struggle. A soldier from the 96th Pennsylvania observed that the attackers had “captured, killed, or wounded the big majority of the first pit [trench].” The captors turned the men over to the supporting assault lines and continued the attack.<sup>28</sup> A 5th Maine private ran his bayonet through a soldier in the earthworks. A Confederate captain fired his revolver at the private from a couple of paces away but missed. The 5th Maine soldier bayoneted the captain before being gunned down by a Confederate lieutenant.<sup>29</sup> The Confederate lieutenant probably also received some wound in the melee. Captain R.R. Hanes of Company D lost his life in this battle when a Federal soldier plunged a bayonet completely through his body. Hanes’ company lost two lieutenants wounded near him and he could possibly be the officer bayoneted by the 5th Maine soldier.<sup>30</sup> Hanes’ tenure of twenty-four months as the longest serving company commander in the 44th Georgia ended abruptly on this day.<sup>31</sup>

Company I’s Lieutenant Smith tried to rally his men and found himself surrounded by Federal soldiers who leveled their rifles at him. They demanded that he surrender his sword to them and, when he refused, a Federal thrust a bayonet into his hip. Smith drew back and threw the sword as hard as he could back behind him toward the rear Confederate trenches to prevent its capture. His enraged captors hustled the bleeding Smith back to the support line as a prisoner.<sup>32</sup>

Despite some bloody hand-to-hand struggles, Upton's attack realized complete surprise and initial success. The Union rush captured 44th Georgia regimental commander Colonel William H. Peebles and many of his officers within a couple of minutes. Individuals or small groups of men fought on by firing their one loaded round, stabbing at the attackers with bayonets, or using their rifles as clubs. The attackers made short work of these outnumbered men and either killed or captured them. The Federal officers herded over 300 prisoners from Doles' brigade into a single mass and forced them to run across the field and into the woods from where the attack originated.

Smith's Battery continued firing at the Federal assault force and the woods. When the gunners saw the Confederate prisoners running across the field, it looked to them like a counterattack by Doles. The artillerymen leaped up on the works and began cheering, but quickly realized their mistake. In the confusion, some of Walker's Virginians thought the men to be a Federal retreat and fired, wounding several of their Georgia comrades.<sup>33</sup> Some of the 44th Georgia soldiers fell back to the left of their position and mingled with the cannons of Smith's Battery. They included Private James L. Buckelew of Company H and he lay so close to one of the cannon that the gun's blast deafened him. Federals captured the stunned Buckelew, who lost his older brother John mortally wounded at Ellerson's Mill in 1862. Word James survived and sat in a Northern prison camp eventually reached the apprehensive Buckelew family in Pike County.<sup>34</sup>

Captain Smith's gunners could not fire very long for fear of hitting friendly soldiers intermingled with the attacking Federals. The 49th Pennsylvania captured him, all four guns, and about 20 men belonging to the crews.<sup>35</sup> On the other side of the

breakthrough, the 5th Maine held on to the shoulder of the penetration. However, without additional support, Upton's attack had reached its culminating point. A few score 44th Georgia soldiers made it back to the shelter of a supporting trench approximately 80 yards to the rear of the breached fieldworks. Here, they joined elements of the reserve brigade and began to pour a steady fire into the Federals concentrated at the breakthrough. Regiments of Walker's Brigade on the east and Daniel's Brigade on the west each refused their flank by bringing it back at an angle to the main line. These actions limited the scope of the rupture in Ewell's line and bought precious time.

General Ewell threw his reserve brigades into the fight and brought up elements of Gordon's Division. Upton realized the increased fire on his soldiers could only mean arrival of Confederate reinforcements. He ordered the regimental commanders to displace to the opposite side of the captured earthworks, use them for cover, and return fire. He then rode back across the field to get the three Vermont regiments to exploit his success, but found that they had already joined the battle. General Russell, the division commander, conferred with Upton at the edge of the woods. Both agreed that the attack would fail without more troops. Russell directed Upton to pull his regiments back to the Union lines. Upton passed along the order and the men began moving back. The 1st New York Battery fired a series of shells to cover Upton's withdrawal and continued for a half-hour after dark. A few infantrymen did not receive the retreat order and stayed to fight until eventually expelled by Confederates moving up to restore the line.<sup>36</sup>

The disorganized 44th Georgia survivors formed a small part of the force fighting to retake the earthworks. They freed many prisoners who the Federals had not yet sent

back over the earthworks into captivity. Among those now freed stood General Doles. He had dropped to the ground and played dead as the counterattacking Confederates came up. In the confusion, the retreating Federals did not notice his deception. Doles, assisted by the remaining brigade leadership, began to organize his shattered unit as the firing died out.<sup>37</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel James W. Beck, on failing to find Colonel Peebles, assumed temporary command of the 44th Georgia as it tried to reestablish the ruptured section of earthworks. The 44th's Sergeant Major Martin V. B. Estes came to him asking permission to go out forward of the earthworks and retrieve the sword from the body of a dead Federal lieutenant colonel. Beck initially refused, but relented when Estes persisted. Estes slipped over the fieldworks and found the lieutenant colonel's body in the fading light. The corpse yielded a coat, sword, and a fine pair of boots. A search of the coatpockets turned up a large quantity of greenback money. Estes kept the coat, money, and boots. The sword he gave to General Doles, who having just spent some long moments in captivity, probably lost his and had use for another.<sup>38</sup> If Estes was correct about the rank of the dead officer, it in all likelihood was Lieutenant Colonel John B. Miles of the 49th Pennsylvania. The 49th attacked in the second rank in the 44th Georgia's sector of the line and no other Federal lieutenant colonels reportedly died in or near the earthworks. Miles' body could not be identified by either Confederate or Federal burial details, a situation Estes certainly contributed to by removing the body's sword and coat, and they interred his remains in an unmarked grave.<sup>39</sup>

### Searching for Survivors

Colonel Upton estimated his losses at 1,000 killed, wounded, and missing on May 10. The 49th Pennsylvania fighting in the 44th Georgia's sector suffered the worst, losing 246 of 474 men in the fight as well as its colonel and lieutenant colonel.<sup>40</sup> While it is true that Upton's attack failed to achieve Grant's intent or Upton's original objectives, it set a precedent that General Grant would test again very soon. The attack demonstrated that the Army of Northern Virginia's fieldworks could be assaulted under certain circumstances. Even when reinforced by artillery and with supporting trenchlines, the earthworks could be breached by stealth and application of overwhelming force on a narrow front. Grant resolved to attack the entrenchments again, only with more forces under cover of darkness. Coordination problems prevented Grant from executing his intentions on May 11, so he rescheduled it for May 12.

As dawn broke on May 11, Lieutenant Colonel Beck observed very little of the 44th Georgia left to command. He assembled the remainder and moved into a position in the reserve line of trenches behind the breakthrough point. Details helped remove the Confederate dead and bury the 100 or so Union dead found inside the earthworks.<sup>41</sup> It rained hard intermittently throughout the day,<sup>42</sup> and no doubt compounded the men's feelings of shock and defeat. The nearly 300 missing faces provided proof of the regiment's close brush with obliteration.

Fighting in front of the earthworks continued without respite. Sergeant Joseph G. Lewis of Company E directed a group of skirmishers trying to restore the protective screen in the woods. He fell wounded with a bullet fracturing the upper third of his right

arm. Federal skirmishers captured him and he eventually arrived at a hospital in Fredericksburg. Surgeons cut off his arm at the shoulder joint and sent him, apparently in their minds a hopelessly wounded man, back into Confederate lines as part of a wounded prisoner exchange. Lewis soon died, leaving a wife and a four-year-old son.<sup>43</sup>

In recognition of Doles' depleted manpower state, Ewell relocated the entire brigade sometime on May 11 to a reserve position in some supporting earthworks behind the west face of the Mule shoe.<sup>44</sup> The surviving 44th Georgia men slept soundly on the night of May 11. Before daybreak, the long roll of drums stirred them awake to a thick fog. Even after the sun rose, soldiers could not see a man thirty feet away. They could hear the ominous rumble of gunfire somewhere near the northern tip of the Mule Shoe. Officers and sergeants quickly passed the word to the rank and file that another breakthrough was in progress.<sup>45</sup>

Grant was trying Upton's method again, but on a massive scale. Two Federal corps burst into the northern apex of the Mule Shoe at 4:30 A.M. This assault captured thousands of Confederates and about twenty artillery pieces in quick fashion. The fighting to regain the salient led to nearly twenty-four hours of horrific slaughter near the tip known as the Bloody Angle. The attackers expanded the gap and began moving south toward the base of the salient. Confederate attempts to seal off the new breakthrough and restore the line initially met with little success. The dense fog, smoke, and deafening noise made troop movements uncertain and identity of friend and foe very difficult. About 5:15 A.M. a Confederate staff major arrived to tell Doles to move his brigade to



the east face of the salient, by now also under assault. Doles complied, and by 6:30 A.M. he had moved the brigade across the base of the Mule Shoe.<sup>46</sup>

Almost immediately the 4th, 12th, and 44th Georgia joined in with a counterattack conducted by the brigades of Scales, Thomas, and Evans. Scales commanded five North Carolina regiments. Thomas and Evans commanded Georgians with the 14th, 35th, 45th, and 49th Georgia under Thomas, and the 13th, 26th, 31st, 38th, 60th, and 61st Georgia regiments under Evans. The 44th Georgia joined scores of their family members, neighbors, and friends in the attack.<sup>47</sup> The counterattack experienced very modest success, and the 44th continued to fight to restore the line.

The 44th Georgia participated in the confused fighting all day and into the night of May 12. Fortunately for the regiment, it did not fight at the Bloody Angle location. The majority of the action involving the regiment occurred some 500-800 yards away on the east side of the salient employed chiefly in a supporting role behind engaged units. While it is very difficult to sort out the regimental maneuvers, it is not so difficult to determine that the regiment lost two men killed, one mortally wounded, one wounded, and one captured.<sup>48</sup>

The 44th's Sergeant Major Estes went down with a gunshot to the head. The men in the ranks next to him saw him go down, examined his wound, and thought it to be a mortal injury. Estes did not agree. It took five months, but he would recover and eventually rejoin the regiment.<sup>49</sup> Private William F. Wallis suffered a leg wound May 12, one day past the two year anniversary of his enlistment in Company D. Surgeons furloughed him home to Clayton County to recover. Federal troops captured him during

the campaign around Atlanta and sent him to a Louisville, Kentucky, prison. He signed the Oath of Allegiance in October 1864 with the condition that he stay north of the Ohio River until the war ended. Only Wallis and ten other 44th Georgia soldiers would sign the oath during the course of the war.<sup>50</sup>

Private James C. Norton transferred to Company E from the 13th Georgia Infantry three days before the 44th Georgia left Camp Terrell for the Wilderness. Undoubtedly he transferred to serve with the five Norton men already in the company. He went down with wounds in his right shoulder and one of his ankles. Only eighteen years old, Norton counted almost three years as a soldier. Surgeons sent him home to get well after two months in hospitals, but he developed complications and died at home with his family grieving over him.<sup>51</sup>

Doles kept his men active near the fighting in the Mule Shoe until sometime after 3 A.M. on the morning of May 13. About that time Lee withdrew to a new set of fieldworks erected across the southern base of the salient. The new line, some 800 yards beyond the deepest Union penetration, abandoned the troublesome and bloody Mule Shoe apex entirely.<sup>52</sup> Both armies seemed exhausted by the day-long struggle of May 12. A comparative lull settled over Spotsylvania from May 13 to May 18. Rainshowers muddied the roads and made it difficult for Grant to shift his numerically stronger army around to deliver another surprise attack. Doles and the 44th Georgia occupied reserve positions southeast of the Harrison house during most of this period behind Daniel's old brigade at the western base of the salient. Daniel had lost his life during the May 12

fighting had been replaced by General Grimes, a North Carolinian that the 44th Georgia would work closely with until the end of the war.<sup>53</sup>

Early on May 18, with drier roads allowing him to shift some of his forces, Grant tried another attack. This time the line across the base of the salient formed the target. The attack started about 4:30 A.M. and ended before 9 A.M. Lee's artillerymen commanded all approaches to the new line, however, and artillery fire broke up this attack virtually single handed.<sup>54</sup>

Lee attempted to follow up this successful defense by sending Ewell and his corps out of the fieldworks on a move around Grant's right flank to strike at the Federal lines of communication. Ewell began his move cloaked in darkness at 2 A.M. on May 19. The 44th Georgia fell in as part of Doles' Brigade at the rear of Rodes' Division. The march route took the Brock Road to get around the Federal right.<sup>55</sup> The maneuver led to the confused brush with the Federals now known as the Battle of Harris Farm. The Harris farm is near the Fredericksburg Road and Ewell's advance ran into Union troops very late in the afternoon. The fighting died out around 9 P.M. and Ewell returned to the Confederate lines. The 44th Georgia lost two soldiers captured, one each from Companies E and F.<sup>56</sup>

Failure of the May 18 attack signaled to Grant the need to try another strategy he had considered for quite some time. The Battle of Harris Farm did not deter him from issuing orders again taking the Army of the Potomac south beyond Lee's right flank. He sent one corps marching for Hanover Junction at the connection of the Virginia Central and the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac railroads on May 20. Lee depended on

supplies traveling on both these railroads and sent Ewell's nearly wrecked corps marching south to protect the Junction on May 21.<sup>(17)</sup> This ended the fighting around Spotsylvania that had nearly destroyed the 44th Georgia as an effective fighting force and shifted the battle once more to the south and nearer Richmond.

### No Rest for the Weary

Since Colonel Peebles had entered the Federal lines as a prisoner of war, Lieutenant Colonel Beck remained in command of the regimental remnants after the battle when Peebles could not be found. Soldiers assisting the wounded did find Peebles' brother Henry, a sergeant in Company A, with a leg wound so severe that the Federals did not think it worth carrying him back into captivity. The wound permanently disabled Sergeant Peebles and finished his military service.<sup>57</sup> After the war and for the rest of his life, he carried the nickname "Tip" because the awkward limp caused by his wound made it look as if he would "tip" over while walking.<sup>58</sup>

Private Crawford Phillips' wounds testified to the savagery on fighting on May 10. Phillips received bayonet wounds in the right chest and arm as well as a gunshot wound to the neck. His captors forced some of the 44th Georgia men to assist Phillips in moving back into the Union lines. He went to two hospitals in Washington, but died on the following May 29. Phillips' brother David had earlier died in the service of the 44th Georgia back in 1862.<sup>59</sup> Private William A. Johnson of Company I had a minie ball smash into his upper arm and split the bone for three inches before breaking his shoulderbone. Johnson suffered for six weeks before a surgeon removed the bone

fragments. The same surgeon a month later pronounced that Johnson had “pretty good use of arm.”<sup>60</sup>

Private Thomas Smith enlisted in Company E on April 12, only three weeks before the Wilderness fighting started, to soldier with his father William. Although William Smith survived the attack, his seventeen-year-old son Thomas died during the assault. It was a sad underscoring of the family character of the 44th Georgia Infantry as misfortune visited many families more than once as a result of the fighting May 10. No less than nineteen families with sons in the regiment lost a pair of them to captivity during Upton’s assault.<sup>61</sup>

Upton’s attack nearly destroyed the entire 44th Georgia and inflicted on it its second worst loss of the war on May 10. Only the charge at Ellerson’s Mill surpassed the number of casualties on this day. The company losses in killed, wounded, and captured are shown in table 5.

Table 5. Company Losses on May 10, 1864	
A	3/9/13
B	0/5/26
C	2/5/26
D	1/7/19
E	8/8/14
F	1/2/14
G	2/7/18
H	1/4/15
I	0/4/36
K	3/3/27

Total losses for the companies and the staff came to 21 killed, 53 wounded, and 202 captured. Of the wounded, ten would soon expire from their wounds and a score would be rendered unfit for continued service. The loss rate of men killed, wounded and captured topped 55 percent<sup>62</sup> with the loss of leaders even more severe. After Colonel Peebles, two of his company commanders, N. B. Durham (C) and James H. Connally (E), joined him in captivity. Two company captains, R. R. Hanes (D) and Beamon C. Johnson (K), lay dead on the ground. Replacing the officer losses would be a challenging task because so few junior officers survived the fight unhurt or escaped capture. Lieutenants Sanford A. Moore (A), James H. Stewart (B), and Cosby Moore (K) died in the trenches. Lieutenant Sidney D. Mann (D) received wounds that would kill him after two months of lingering in hospitals. Lieutenant T. R. Daniel (D) caught a bullet that disabled him for some time., and at least three lieutenants joined the ranks of the captured.<sup>63</sup>

One soldier recounted in a letter home that Company C began the Wilderness fighting with fifty-eight men and that only twenty of them remained after the debacle of May 10.<sup>64</sup> Each company suffered serious, irreplaceable losses, but the hardest hit by far was Company I with only the commander, Captain John H. Harris, and one sergeant left fit for duty.<sup>65</sup> Company I would have to wait until some of the sick and wounded men could recover and rejoin the ranks before it could fight effectively.

For a while the leadership losses hardly seemed to matter because so few of the regiment remained to fill the ranks. Hardly surprising could be called the fact that Private Benjamin C. Langford came up among the missing from Company C. Langford manned

a rifle pit as a skirmisher about fifty yards in front of the earthworks. He refused to retreat into the earthworks and repeated his trick in the Wilderness of letting the attacking Federal line pass him by, then hoped to rejoin his comrades as they counterattacked. His company tried to find him or his body after the battle and sent word home that they could not. Langford had gone north to spend nine months in a Federal prison camp.<sup>66</sup>

Lieutenant Levi Smith stated in his diary that Upton's attack forced through the 4th Georgia's portion of the line, fanned out, and then flanked the 12th and 44th Georgia.<sup>67</sup> The 4th Georgia had twelve killed, fourteen wounded, and fifty-nine captured.<sup>68</sup> The 12th Georgia lost 11 killed, 14 wounded, and 138 captured.<sup>69</sup> The large number of captured in the 12th and 44th Georgia seems to support Smith's assertion of the 12th and 44th being taken in flank. Doles' Brigade on May 10 lost at least 44 killed, 81 wounded, and 399 captured. The 44th losses in killed nearly equaled the other two regiments losses in killed and captured combined, and wounded men down almost doubled those of the 4th and 12th Georgia. This wittled Doles' Brigade down to the smallest in Rodes' Division and would seriously limit Rodes' options in deploying the brigade in future fighting.

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<sup>1</sup>Larry B. Maier, *Rough and Regular: A History of Philadelphia's 119th Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, The Gray Reserves* (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 1997), 181-182.

<sup>2</sup>OR, 36.1, 667.

<sup>3</sup>Rhea, 161-164.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>OR, 36.1, 774-775.

<sup>6</sup>Matter, 160-161.

<sup>7</sup>OR, 36.1, 774-775.

<sup>8</sup>Matter, 157.

<sup>9</sup>Maier, 180.

<sup>10</sup>OR, 36.1, 667.

<sup>11</sup>Maier, 180.

<sup>12</sup>OR, 36.1, 667.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 667-668.

<sup>14</sup>Emil and Ruth Rosenblatt, ed. *Hard Marching Every Day: The Civil War Letters of Private Wilbur Fisk, 1861-1865* (Lawrence, KK: University of Kansas Press, 1992), 221.

<sup>15</sup>Matter, 162.

<sup>16</sup>Rhea, 164.

<sup>17</sup>OR, 36.1, 667.

<sup>18</sup>George W. Bicknell, *History of the Fifth Maine Regiment* (Portland, ME: Hall L. Davis, 1870), 313.

<sup>19</sup>Rosenblatt, 222.

<sup>20</sup>Matter, 162.

<sup>21</sup>OR, 36.1, 755.

<sup>22</sup>Matter, 162.

<sup>23</sup>Maier, 183.

<sup>24</sup>Matter, 162.

<sup>25</sup>Levi J. Smith diary, United Daughters of the Confederacy Transcripts, Volume 8, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, GA, 4-27.



<sup>26</sup>Thomas Dingler, United Daughters of the Confederacy Transcripts, Volume 13, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia, 239-240.

<sup>27</sup>Beavers.

<sup>28</sup>Rhea, 170.

<sup>29</sup>Maier, 184.

<sup>30</sup>Thomas, 488.

<sup>31</sup>Henderson, 763.

<sup>32</sup>Smith, 10.

<sup>33</sup>Matter, 163.

<sup>34</sup>Henderson, 809.

<sup>35</sup>Maier, 183.

<sup>36</sup>OR, 36.1, 668, 770.

<sup>37</sup>Rhea, 173.

<sup>38</sup>Thomas, 493.

<sup>39</sup>OR, 36.1, 152.

<sup>40</sup>Rhea, 176.

<sup>41</sup>OR, 36.1, 1072.

<sup>42</sup>Thomas, 14.

<sup>43</sup>Julian Ray Lewis, *Footprints: The Ancestors and Descendants of Ernest Lewis and Creola Kincaid* (Phoenix, AZ: by the author, 1989), 6-8.

<sup>44</sup>Matter, 172.

<sup>45</sup>Thomas, 479.

<sup>46</sup>Matter, 203-204.

- <sup>47</sup>Rhea, 248-253.
- <sup>48</sup>Henderson, 716-838.
- <sup>49</sup>Thomas, 493.
- <sup>50</sup>Henderson, 774.
- <sup>51</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup>OR, 36.1, 1073.
- <sup>53</sup>Matter, 259.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid, 306-307.
- <sup>55</sup>Henderson, 774-795.
- <sup>56</sup>Matter, 312-340.
- <sup>57</sup>Henderson, 729.
- <sup>58</sup>Joseph Moore, letter to the author, "Peebles family genealogy," 2 September 1995.
- <sup>59</sup>MSHCW, vol. 8, 467.
- <sup>60</sup>Ibid., vol. 10, 603.
- <sup>61</sup>Henderson, 716-838.
- <sup>62</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>63</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>64</sup>Jackson, 23 May 1864.
- <sup>65</sup>James M. McClelland, 3 June 1864, Miscellaneous Manuscript File 142, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia.
- <sup>66</sup>Jackson, 23 May 1864.
- <sup>67</sup>Smith, 17.

<sup>68</sup>Henderson, vol. 1, 551-641.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., vol. 2, 254.

## CHAPTER 10

### DESPERATE TIMES AND DESPERATE MEASURE

#### One Man in Three Left to March South

The 44th Georgia moved away from the earthworks that cost the regiment so much to defend and took up the route for Hanover Junction at mid-morning May 21. The regiment moved with about 250 men after having lost well over half its strength in just over two weeks of fighting. The movement followed a series of little used farm roads to emerge in the vicinity of Mud Tavern, now the crossroads of Thornburg. Here the march turned due south on the Telegraph Road, the present day Highway 1. The regiment made good time, crossing the Matta River over the bridge at Jerrell's Mill in the afternoon and closing in on the divisional camps between Newton's Store and Dickinson's Mill on Polecat Creek by 11 P.M. that night.<sup>1</sup>

Rodes had his men on the road the next day before the sun came up. Shortly after sunrise, the weather turned unbearably hot. The march continued despite the heat at a rapid pace in order to reach the Hanover Junction area and assume a good defensive alignment before major Federal forces arrived there. The 44th Georgia stuck to the Telegraph Road, passing Mount Carmel Church and crossing the North Anna River shortly before 10 A.M. and closing into a position shielding Hanover Junction about 1 P.M. that afternoon.<sup>2</sup>

Hanover Junction, now the town of Doswell, assumed a critical importance for Lee if he intended to operate far north of Richmond. The town hosted the juncture of the

Virginia Central and the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac railroads. The Virginia Central connected Richmond with the Shenandoah Valley and the farm products there and Lee could afford neither to be destroyed. The North Anna looped northeast of Hanover Junction which allowed Lee to choose to defend the area behind the river with his troops deployed in an inverted "V." If Union forces crossed the North Anna to either side of the "V," Lee planned to shuffle troops from the other side of the "V" and launch an attack.<sup>3</sup> By May 24, this line featured good fieldworks and a thick belt of skirmishers.

Doles arranged his regiments in a defensive line along the right leg of the "V" southwest of a house belonging to Major Doswell, a local planter. The 44th Georgia would be defending a place with a few differences from the Wilderness. The numerous farm clearings ensured more open terrain. Better roads served the locality, and the regiment would have the security of a river about a quarter mile to its front. Thick woods, however, did stand in places nearer the river on Major Doswell's property. General Hancock, commanding the Federal Second Corps, pushed out a heavy reconnaissance in force south from the Telegraph Bridge area at mid-day May 24. This soon brushed against the heavy Confederate skirmish line. Hancock sent more troops to learn the disposition of Confederate forces and the fight spread east along the skirmish line toward the river. Sometime between 5 and 6 P.M., Doles' skirmishers joined the battle.<sup>4</sup>

The skirmishers in all probability came into contact with the 19th Maine from Hancock's Second Division, First Brigade. The Maine infantrymen, through a lost guide from its parent brigade staff, blundered into a section of the Confederate line in the open

ground around the Doswell house. The Confederate fire slammed into the Maine soldiers, sending them scurrying for cover. More Federal units pitched in to help the 19th Maine. The 44th Georgia participated in this confused ebb and flow of combat in the woods and fields of the Doswell property. A huge thunderstorm interrupted the fight, only to have the resume when the rain ceased and then fizzle out after darkness.<sup>5</sup> By now, the experienced Georgians knew how to use cover and not risk themselves unnecessarily. The regiment lost just one soldier from Company D wounded in the fighting around Hanover Junction.<sup>6</sup>

The reinforced skirmish line of three Confederate brigades held off the efforts of probably a whole Federal division. The exhausted soldiers drew rations after midnight and prepared them as best they could. May 25 passed by with very little contact along the lines, and the 44th Georgia endured a cold rain throughout much of the day on May 26. Grant and his staff had been very busy over the last few days planning another move to the southeast. The Confederate skirmishers discovered empty trenches in front of them at sunrise May 27. The Army of Northern Virginia hurriedly took up a line of march south down the Telegraph Road to counter this latest move. Lee anticipated another move by Grant and his staff officers prepared for it very well with Confederate units vacating the earthworks protecting Hanover Junction by midmorning.<sup>7</sup>

The 44th Georgia marched to the southeast with Doles' Brigade, passing through the tiny hamlet of Taylorsville and later crossing the South Anna River on a railroad bridge and continuing down the railroad bed of the Virginia Central for a distance. Other small crossroads of Wickham, Wingfield, and Merry Oaks passed slowly by as the

regiment weaved its way to the southeast. The march for the day concluded at a suitable campsite east of Hughes' Crossroads, now Poindexter's, early in the evening.<sup>8</sup>

By far the most significant event to the 44th Georgia and all the Second Corps on May 27 concerned General Ewell. He developed the same intestinal sickness striking a good deal of the Confederate leadership, including Lee himself. Lee offered to put Ewell on indefinite leave, but Ewell refused. Lee relieved him anyway, replacing him with General Jubal Early, a former division commander under Ewell who had commanded the Third Corps temporarily during the Spotsylvania fighting. For some time, Lee used the illness as a veil for replacing Ewell.<sup>9</sup>

Doles' Brigade moved out at 3 A.M. May 28 toward Atlee's Station, an important site on the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad. After crossing the tracks, the brigade continued on toward the southeast. With less distance to travel on this march, the brigade arrived in the vicinity of Pole Green Church and Hundley's Corner early in the afternoon. The 44th Georgia moved into a defensive line and began to prepare fieldworks near the Old Church Road leading from Mechanicsville to Bethesda Church.<sup>10</sup>

The watercourse of Totopotomoy Creek and its meandering tributaries dominated the new area of operations. Thick woods, marshy in many places, and the tangled vines and brambles reminded many veterans of the Wilderness combat zone. Men in the 44th Georgia already harbored very unpleasant memories of this section of Virginia. Barely four miles behind them lay the battlefield of Ellerson's Mill where the regiment suffered so terribly not yet two years past. Many of the men still serving lost friends and relatives at the Mill, and they undoubtedly determined to inflict the same type of losses on the

Federal invaders. Lee needed to stop Grant's constant slide around his right flank. Each maneuver brought Grant twenty-five miles closer to Richmond before he could be brought to battle. Time, space, and men could be deciding factors and Lee lost more of them each day. Accordingly, Lee instructed his newest corps commander to plan an attack to stun the Federal left and halt its progress toward Richmond.

Early planned an attack on a Federal division facing him along the Old Church Road. He shifted to the southeast across Beaverdam Creek and ordered Rodes' Division to lead the attack after noon on May 30. Rodes pushed up the road in the direction of Bethesda Church. Initially the attack routed a portion of General Samuel Crawford's Third Division, Fifth Corps. This division contained the two brigades of Pennsylvania Reserves who inflicted the horrible losses on the 44th Georgia at Ellerson's Mill. Several of the Pennsylvania regiments were due to be discharged that day and they apparently did not fight well. Rodes smashed into the Pennsylvania Reserves about 2 P.M. The Reserves and other Federal units in the immediate area lost hundreds of prisoners around Bethesda Church. The rapid advance took Rodes too far in front of other divisions Early tried to bring up in support. Early drew Rodes back down the road toward Mechanicsville and consolidated his position by nightfall. The 44th Georgia's couple of casualties implies that, although they maneuvered with Rodes's Division during the battle, they were only lightly engaged. The regiment contributed very little to the fighting around Bethesda Church on May 30 that cost the Confederates roughly 1,200 casualties.<sup>11</sup>



Grant continued to sideslip to his left and move closer to Richmond. Lee countered by concentrating the Army of Northern Virginia near the twin crossroads of Old Cold Harbor and New Cold Harbor. General Early took note of the Federal shift of units in his sector. After noon on June 2, Early attacked what he thought to be the exposed First Division Ninth Corps with two divisions of his own, including Rodes' depleted unit. The Federal division occupied a strong defensive position. Rodes attacked along the road from Hundley's Corner. Rodes' attack again met with some initial success and captured many prisoners. General Heth, leading the second attacking division, experienced some success as well. However, the movement attracted the attention of General Burnside and he assembled his Ninth Corps in support to block any gains made by Rodes and Heth. This resulted in Burnside not being able to support Grant's massive attack planned for June 3.<sup>12</sup> Again, the 44th Georgia was a part of this attack, but just as on May 30 it was only lightly engaged.

After the attack on June 2, Early's divisions adjusted their lines to take advantage of more favorable terrain. General Doles inspected portions of the line, probably with the disaster of May 10 still fresh in his mind. A Federal sharpshooter noticed what appeared to be a high-ranking Confederate officer moving along the lines and shot him through his left chest. Doles died almost instantly,<sup>13</sup> and his death profoundly affected the 44th Georgia. Although their sister regiment 4th Georgia men called him their own, the 44th Georgia soldiers had a deep, abiding respect and trust in Doles developed through experience on the battlefields. Most men thought him a very capable general and earnestly lamented his loss as a great tragedy.<sup>14</sup>

Colonel Philip Cook temporarily assumed command of the brigade and would lead it for all but the last two weeks of the war. Cook had joined the 4th Georgia as a private and since Sharpsburg had been its colonel. He had served in the state legislature before the war and supported himself by practicing law and doubtless knew many of the 44th Georgia leaders. The genial Cook came across as a kind uncle to most of the soldiers, and although he lacked the aggressive style and dash of Doles, Cook capably led the brigade for the rest of the war except for the final three weeks.<sup>15</sup>

Grant suffered a great tragedy of his own June 3. In attacking prepared positions again, the Army of the Potomac lost literally thousands of dead and wounded in abortive attacks around Cold Harbor. The assaults made little impression on Lee's lines.

Thwarted yet again, Grant decided to swing to the south and cross the James River. He would try to get into Richmond from a new direction, remaining confident that he could wear Lee down anywhere the two armies met.<sup>16</sup> This time, however, Lee developed a new strategy of his own to try. In an ambitious move, he would detach Early's Second Corps and send it back to the Shenandoah Valley to protect it, clear it from Union troops, and perhaps invade the north again. Lee gambled that Early could make enough of a threat to cause Grant to divert troops from the Richmond effort. Spared from the first few months of trench warfare around Petersburg, the 44th Georgia would embark for the Valley again.

### Visiting Sites Old and New

General Lee invited General Early to a conference at his headquarters late in the evening of June 12. Although neither man wrote down detailed notes of their conversation, Early fully understood what Lee intended. He would take the Second Corps and campaign aggressively in the lower, or northern, part of the Shenandoah Valley aiming to defeat the Federal forces there and draw some away from the Richmond area. Early left Lee's headquarters around midnight. The Second Corps had camped for the last several days behind the lines of the Third Corps a mile west of Gaines' Mill. Staff officers carried instructions from Early to his division commanders to prepare to move immediately. By 3 A.M. June 13, elements of the Second Corps took to the roads and quietly marched away. The line of march carried the 44th Georgia back along the Mechanicsville Pike through Mechanicsville. If the sleepy soldiers noticed it, the place undoubtedly brought up memories of comrades and family members maimed or killed just a short distance away on the Ellerson's Mill battleground. The column crossed the Chickahominy River and angled up the Three Chopt Road.<sup>17</sup>

After making almost twenty-five miles, the Second Corps camped for the night on the south side of the South Anna River at Auburn Mills.<sup>18</sup> Excited by the prospect of returning to the Valley, the Second Corps soldiers rose early and moved on northwest on the Three Chopt Road to a campsite slightly beyond Gardiner's Crossroads on June 14. The night's camp for June 15 found the 44th Georgia in camp at Valentine's Mill near the present day crossroads hamlet of Thelma after passing through Louisa Court House and Trevilian Station.<sup>19</sup>

Early moved the hard-marching soldiers to Shadwell Station on the Virginia Central Railroad June 16.<sup>20</sup> He planned to load his force onto railroad cars and move them to crush a Union force threatening Lynchburg. At 2 A.M. troops started loading the trains at Keswick Depot, but enough cars could not be located to lift the whole of Early's force at one time. Rodes' Division and the 44th Georgia marched south along the tracks of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad to meet trains returning from Lynchburg to pick them up.<sup>21</sup> The troops of Cook's Brigade traveled as far as the depot at North Garden, now a crossroads by the same name, and made camp for the night before trains arrived for them on June 18.<sup>22</sup>

Early's surprise injection of forces helped to defeat the Union force threatening the town on June 18. Rodes' Division arrived too late to participate in the battle at Lynchburg, although Federal leaders had taken notice of the division's arrival. Early made plans to attack the Federals on June 19 and press a pursuit to follow up victory, but the Union general commanding the force fronting Lynchburg would not follow the part Early planned for him, however.<sup>23</sup> Union forces withdrew during the night and Early planned to pursue.

After camping in Lynchburg the night of June 18, Cook's Brigade set out west along the Forest Road from Lynchburg, making Liberty by nightfall.<sup>24</sup> All along the route of march, 44th Georgia troops noticed many houses and barns burned by the Federal force. This made many of the men angry and apprehensive. It angered them because they could see no justification in the destruction, and made them apprehensive

because Union General William T. Sherman at that time threatened Atlanta. If Sherman operated south of Atlanta, the homes of 44th Georgia families lay in his path.

The line of march headed straight for the Blue Ridge Mountains. The regiment camped in the scenic location of Buford's Gap on the night of June 20. The next day's march took them over the Blue Ridge high ground and into the Valley itself. Early had driven his new command of troops very hard, and he knew it. He declared June 22 as a day off from marching to allow the men to rest and recover.<sup>25</sup> Cook's Brigade camped between Hanging Rock and Botetourt Springs on the northern outskirts of Salem.<sup>26</sup>

The 44th Georgia began marching north down the Valley early on June 23 through some of the most breathtaking scenery the regiment saw during the war. Officers drove the men hard to keep up with Ramseur's leading division. After camping south of the James River that night, the regiment crossed the James early the next morning on a rickety single-file bridge at Buchanan.<sup>27</sup> Camp for that night lay along Buffalo Creek toward Lexington.<sup>28</sup>

Rodes' Division reached Lexington the morning of the next day, June 25, and continued to move down the Valley, camping around Fairfield. The following day, the Second Corps officially received the designation as the Army of the Valley District, with Early confirmed as a lieutenant general at its head. Six regiments in Evans' Brigade that had fought alongside the 44th Georgia at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania, a battery in the army artillery, and Cook's Brigade formed the Georgia contingent. Early rested his new army at Staunton until June 27. At 3 A.M. that morning the approximately 14,000 troops under his command swung out on the Valley Turnpike and headed down the

Valley in the direction of the Potomac. Early purposefully stripped the army of all baggage and conveyance to increase mobility. The new regulations and marching orders allowed Cook's Brigade one wagon for its headquarters and one wagon to carry the cooking utensils for every 500 men.<sup>29</sup> That worked out to about two wagons for Cook and his small brigade.

The line of march for the day totaled only eight or nine miles to an overnight stay near Mount Crawford on the North River. On June 28, the 44th Georgia traveled with the Army of the Valley District through Harrisonburg to reach comfortable camps around Big Spring, now called Lacey Spring. This good day's march of around 24 miles brought the men into the shadow of Massanutten Mountain again.<sup>30</sup> Early continued the rapid pace down the Valley, stopping between Hawkinstown and Edinburg on June 30, reaching Strasburg on July 1, then making Bartonville five miles south of Winchester the next day. At this pace, Early continued to outmarch Federal intelligence concerning his exact movements. He continued on, pushing the army to its camp near Leetown July 3. From this position, he prepared to take Harper's Ferry on the Potomac River.<sup>31</sup>

Cook's Brigade left the camp near Leetown and with Rodes' Division occupied a portion of Bolivar Heights overlooking Harper's Ferry by 9 A.M. July 4. By evening they moved into the town itself behind the evacuating enemy. Federal forces burning the bridges and holding the imposing Maryland Heights across the Potomac River frustrated Early's goal of crossing here at the town. They did not prevent Rodes' Division from participating in "a universal pillaging of United States property" that lasted through the hours of darkness. Soldiers feasted on fruit, sugar, coffee, molasses and delicacies of

sardines and oysters abandoned in Federal supply warehouses. Much of this booty had been stockpiled for a Federal celebration of Independence Day, and the 44th Georgia celebrated by eating all they could hold. To compound the soldier's happily full stomachs, a shipment of shoes previously ordered by Early arrived by wagon train to replace footwear worn out marching toward and down the Valley.<sup>32</sup>

General Early possessed neither the forces nor the time to spare in attacking such a strong position of Maryland Heights. Instead, he opted to take his men north and cross the Potomac by fording it at Shepherdstown where the men of the 44th Georgia waded back into Virginia in 1862 after Antietam. He left Ramseur's and Rodes' divisions to demonstrate against the watching Federal forces, screen the movement, and follow across the Potomac on July 6 and 7. After Cook's Brigade forded the Potomac at Boteler's Ford, the march took it through Sharpsburg and the adjacent battlefield with its memories to again camp alongside Antietam Creek. Early planned to send Rodes and his division along the southern flank of his advancing army by Rohrersville through Crampton's Gap in South Mountain. Once through the gap, Rodes would arrive at Jefferson on the Road from Frederick and cut communications between that town and Federal forces at Harper's Ferry.<sup>33</sup>

#### On to Washington

By July 8, Rodes' part of the plan progressed satisfactorily, taking the 44th Georgia past Rohrersville and through Crampton's Gap. Federal scouts caused some light skirmishing, but it did not delay the division to a significant degree. On July 9, the

division moved into Frederick and took up a movement with Cook's Brigade in the lead along the Baltimore Pike. Doles' mission was to screen Ramseur's Division to the south as Ramseur moved down the pike leading southeast to Washington. Both forces closed shortly on the watercourse of the Monocacy River and sought a way to cross. Federal troops outposted the Jug Bridge fronting Rodes.<sup>34</sup>

Cook put his regiments in skirmish formation south of the Baltimore Pike and advanced on the high ground on the western bank of the Monocacy overlooking Jug Bridge. A Federal skirmish line manned by three companies of the 149th Ohio stood in his way. Cook's skirmishers pressured the Federals, but the pace of advance slowed to a crawl. By late in the day Federal skirmish line retreated back to within 100 yards of Jug Bridge and received reinforcements from the 144th Ohio. Only when Confederate forces forced a crossing to the south and advanced behind the Federals guarding Jug Bridge did the defense collapse, ending the Battle of Monocacy. The 44th Georgia camped on the battlefield that night having lost no one to enemy action. That welcome low figure attested to the regiment's seasoning, level of commitment in the battle, or perhaps both.<sup>35</sup>

Washington lay ahead as Early's next target. Rodes' Division took the lead July 10 and also the next day. The 44th Georgia marched through Gaithersburg, Rockville, and Silver Spring by late morning July 11. The oppressive heat and dust greatly exhausted the troops, moving Early to reduce the pace somewhat. When Early reached sight of the defensive line of forts protecting the city, he himself observed that his troops were "... not in condition to make an attack."<sup>36</sup> Early still ordered Rodes' to make his best attempt at a surprise assault. Rodes assembled as many men as he could, including



the 44<sup>th</sup> Georgia, and by noon sent the force toward the Federal skirmish line in front of Fort Stevens manned by the 150th Ohio and the 26th New York Infantry regiments. The Confederate skirmishers soon pushed these inexperienced troops back, but Federal reinforcements came up and ended the attempt at a surprise entry to the city. By 1 P.M. the firing sputtered and died in front of Fort Stevens.<sup>37</sup>

Early soon learned that two corps of Union troops sent from Grant to assure safety of the Federal capital had landed at the city wharves or soon would do so. With that part of his mission complete, Early knew that staying and fighting risked his whole army. After a council of war with his senior officers, he decided to retreat.<sup>38</sup> The divisions of Rodes and Gordon formed battlelines early on July 12 to cover the retreat. Federal artillery in the forts fired and skirmish forces advanced throughout the day. Although a noisy spectacle, it caused few casualties and the Confederates continued preparations to slip away. Three men from the 44th Georgia fell wounded during this brief exchange of fire.<sup>39</sup>

One of these was Private William P. Bernard of Company A. A rifle bullet broke his shoulder blade and lodged in his body. Federal soldiers found him on the battlefield and evacuated him to a hospital. Bernard lingered in severe pain for several days until he died on July 24. An autopsy found that the bullet broke his fifth rib, punched through his left lung, ranged through his liver, and damaged his pancreas. Given the medical technology of the day, Bernard received a death sentence the instant the shot entered his body.<sup>40</sup>

By 11 P.M. on July 12, the 44th Georgia and the rest of the army began moving in the oppressive heat and dust in the direction of Rockville.<sup>41</sup> The marching for the last month took the regiment near the limit of its endurance and proved too much for some individual soldiers. Five men from the regiment could not keep pace with the withdrawal march and Union forces captured them on June 12 and 13.<sup>42</sup> After marching so long to threaten Washington, it would be a very short walk to a holding pen in the city until they could be moved to another prison.

### The Valley. . . Again

Rodes' Division crossed back into Virginia early on July 14 at White's Ford between Poolesville, Maryland, and Leesburg. The 44th Georgia spent most of July 15 in camp between the ford and Leesburg. The regiment marched with the army on July 16 west through Purcellville, crossing the Blue Ridge Mountains at Snicker's Gap, and camping for the night shortly after transiting the gap. After crossing the Shenandoah River at Castleman's Ferry very early July 17, Rodes' Division camped along the river south of the ferry crossing. The 44th Georgia helped to repel a crossing of the Shenandoah River by Federal forces on July 18. The small skirmish occurred at Island Ford or Cool Springs.<sup>43</sup> The sites are not marked on modern maps, but probably are located in the vicinity of three miles upriver from the Castleman's Ferry site. The regiment lost one man killed in the fight from Company K and two men wounded.<sup>44</sup>

By July 20, as Federal forces continued to try force crossings of the Shenandoah River around his flanks, Early sent his army marching west. Rodes' Division took a line

through White Post and on to Newtown, currently Stephens City. By July 22 the regiment camped northwest of Strasburg. Early needed to keep the Army of the Valley District marching and countermarching throughout the upper fringes of the Valley as a show of strength. He began by moving on Winchester July 24. Rodes' Division clashed with Federal cavalry southeast of Winchester and continued to drive them during the day as far as Stephenson's Depot. The next day the 44th Georgia marched with the division to the old, familiar camps at Bunker Hill.<sup>45</sup>

No matter how comfortable or familiar the camps appeared to be, the 44th Georgia only stayed in them one night. The dawn of July 26 found the regiment marching more down the Valley to Martinsburg and camping along Dry Run north of the town that night. Work crews from the regiment assisted in destroying parts of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad for the next two full days.<sup>46</sup> On July 29, Cook's Brigade again crossed the Potomac, this time at Williamsport and turned in the direction of Boonsboro. Cook returned to the river and crossed back into Virginia at nightfall July 30. The whole operation was intended to cover the crossing of cavalry returning from a raid into Pennsylvania where the Confederate troopers burned the town of Chambersburg. Despite his fond memories of the town, an officer in the 44th Georgia readily endorsed this action as "tit for tat."<sup>47</sup> By July 31, the 44th Georgia again found itself at Bunker Hill, staying through August 3.<sup>48</sup>

On August 4, Early again initiated a series of movements designed to disguise his low numbers by threatening more offensive action. Rodes' Division left Bunker Hill that day and marched beyond Martinsburg to Hainesville. The 44th Georgia crossed the

Potomac at Williamsport and camped near the campus of Saint James College. Rodes retraced his steps the next day back across the Potomac to camp at Hammond's Mill, then arrived back at Bunker Hill on August 7.<sup>49</sup> While Early marched his men back and forth across the lower Valley, his adversaries began to plan action of their own to cut off a portion of Early's forces if the opportunity presented itself.

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<sup>1</sup>J. Michael Miller, *The North Anna Campaign: "Even To Hell Itself," May 21-26, 1864*, 2d ed. (Lynchburg, VA: E. H. Howard, Inc., 1989). 25-26.

<sup>2</sup>OR, 36.1, 1017.

<sup>3</sup>Miller, 89-110.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid..

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 110-115.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Jackson, 23 May 1864.

<sup>9</sup>Gregory Jaynes, *The Killing Ground: Wilderness to Cold Harbor* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1986), 150-169.

<sup>10</sup>Jackson, 23 May 1864.

<sup>11</sup>Smith, 17.

<sup>12</sup>Henderson, vol 1., 551-641.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., vol. 2, 160-245.

<sup>14</sup>McClellan, 3 June 1864.

<sup>15</sup>Thomas, 51-53

<sup>16</sup>Jaynes, 169.

<sup>17</sup>Joseph Judge, *Season of Fire: The Confederate Strike on Washington* (Berryville, VA: Rockbridge Publishing Company, 1994), 88-89

- <sup>18</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 81, No. 6.
- <sup>20</sup>*OR*, 37.1, 1018.
- <sup>21</sup>Judge, 96-97
- <sup>22</sup>*OR*, 37.1.1018.
- <sup>23</sup>Judge, 100-105.
- <sup>24</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 81, No. 6.
- <sup>25</sup>Judge, 111.
- <sup>26</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 81, No. 6.
- <sup>27</sup>Judge, 111-113..
- <sup>28</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 81, No. 6.
- <sup>29</sup>Judge, 115-116.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>31</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 81, No. 4.
- <sup>32</sup>Judge, 141-142.
- <sup>33</sup>Ibid., 145-154.
- <sup>34</sup>Ibid., 173-179.
- <sup>35</sup>Ibid., 175-182.
- <sup>36</sup>*OR*, 37.1, 230-235.
- <sup>37</sup>Judge, 235.
- <sup>38</sup>Ibid., 235-250.
- <sup>39</sup>Henderson, 716-838.
- <sup>40</sup>*MSHCW*, vol. 9, 132.
- <sup>41</sup>Judge, 297.

<sup>42</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>43</sup>*OR*, 37.1, 1022.

<sup>44</sup>Henderson, 828-838.

<sup>45</sup>*OR*, 37.1, 1020-1023.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>Reese, 5 August 1864.

<sup>48</sup>*OR*, 37.1, 1023.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*

## CHAPTER 11

### A VALLEY DEVASTATED--AN ARMY DESTROYED

#### Full Rations of Bitterness

The 44th Georgia spent two restful days in camp at Bunker Hill August 8 and 9. On August 9, a new Federal army came into being with General Philip Sheridan at its head. This newly organized Federal force, called the Army of the Shenandoah, targeted Early's Army of the Valley District and the support rendered to it by the pro-Confederate residents in the Shenandoah Valley. That same day found the Army of the Shenandoah moving on Berryville in an attempt to flank the Confederate camps at Bunker Hill. On August 10, 11 and 12, the 44th Georgia marched south to avoid being cut off in the lower Valley. Initially, the division marched to Stephenson's Depot. The regiment moved into camps it had previously occupied in the vicinity of Fisher's Hill south of Strasburg on August 13. Rumors reported this Confederate position being heavily reinforced, and Sheridan moved back down the Valley. He arrived in Winchester on August 17 before moving to Halltown about three days later.<sup>1</sup>

During this time of march and countermarch, Colonel William H. Peebles rejoined the 44th Georgia. He had been included in an exchange of officer prisoners on August 3 in Charleston, South Carolina. This was a rare occurrence, and it is unknown why the Federal military authorities included him in the exchange. Lieutenant Colonel Beck reverted back to being second in command of the regiment.<sup>2</sup> Word also reached

Cook's Brigade that Cook had been advanced and confirmed as a Brigadier General and would stay with the brigade.<sup>3</sup>

Cook conformed his movements to that of his parent division in pursuit of the retreating enemy, following along in three days of pouring rain with the rest of the army. On August 21, Rodes' Division attacked a portion of the Army of the Shenandoah west of Charles Town. The attack cost Rodes about 160 casualties.<sup>4</sup> Of these, the 44th Georgia contributed one man killed from Company E.<sup>5</sup>

Sheridan dug in his troops between Charles Town and Halltown and awaited an attack. Early instead shuttled most of his force on August 25 and 26 north toward the Potomac River as if threatening another invasion of Maryland. Sheridan did not take advantage of this opportunity to cut Early off. When Early returned to Bunker Hill on August 27, the two opposing armies occupied almost the same dispositions they held at the beginning of the month.<sup>6</sup> The 44th Georgia once again settled into its comfortable and familiar camps at Bunker Hill, interrupted only by a day reconnaissance march on August 31 to Martinsburg.<sup>7</sup>

The first day of September found the 44th Georgia escorting the army wagon trains as they moved to Stephenson's Depot and then returning to the comfortable camps at Bunker Hill. The regiment spent part of September 2 assisting with driving away a force of Union cavalry operating around Summit Point, losing one man wounded in Company H. With that task completed, the regiment marched back to Bunker Hill.<sup>8</sup> The Union army vacated Charles Town on September 3 and moved south to Berryville. The Army of the Valley District countered by concentrating around Winchester. Confederate



skirmishers probed the new Federal positions intermittently for the next two days. On September 4, the divisions of Ramseur and Rodes moved to Berryville, crossing the Opequon Creek at Burnt Factory. Rodes moved his division on a flanking movement to try and trap the Federal force there. Cook deployed the 44th Georgia as skirmishers fully expecting the Federals to evacuate the town, but ran into a strong line of breastworks instead. Rodes retreated at nightfall<sup>9</sup> with the 44th Georgia marching back to Stephenson's Depot the same way it had come.<sup>10</sup>

September 6 signaled the beginning of a series of rainstorms that turned Valley roads into quagmires. The armies occupied their camps and tried to stay dry. As the officers made plans for when the rains ceased and roads dried, most 44th Georgia soldiers had plenty of things to be concerned about at home. By now, the knowledge of the fall of Atlanta could be called commonplace in the regiment. While the men knew that any operations by Sherman south and east of Atlanta would threaten their homes, no one deserted to go south. The unit stayed together with some men cursing Sherman and others praying for his defeat.<sup>11</sup>

The end of the second week of September brought some clearer weather and the roads began drying enough to permit moving large bodies of troops. Early moved first, relocating Rodes' Division beyond Darkesville north of Winchester on September 10, then back to Stephenson's Depot the next day. Even with a battle seemingly imminent, this stay stretched into a week, then longer. The officers in the 44th Georgia speculated uncomfortably on Early's recent detachment of a division headed back to Richmond and also on the certainty of reinforcements arriving in Sheridan's camps.<sup>12</sup> General Grant had

recently visited Sheridan's headquarters, a fact that doomed the period of relative inactivity.

Early convinced himself that Sheridan would not attempt any offensive moves any time soon, even though the Federal force outnumbered his by about 30,000 to 12,000. Even with that disparity of forces in mind, he divided his small army on September 17 and sent a division under Gordon north to tear up the repaired Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at Martinsburg. The 44th Georgia traveled with Rodes' Division in this infantry raid, leaving camp that afternoon and making Bunker Hill by night. The regiment left there for the last time in the war before daylight on September 18 and reached Martinsburg by 9 A.M.<sup>13</sup> When he learned of Early's tactic before Rodes' Division departed Bunker Hill, Sheridan resolved to attack the force staying behind around Winchester. He planned a double envelopment by attacking Winchester from the east with infantry and swinging two divisions of cavalry around to the north. If he moved quickly, he could defeat part of the Army of the Valley District before the two Confederate divisions returned from the Martinsburg area twenty miles away.<sup>14</sup>

The battle would be known as the Third Battle of Winchester. Fought largely over terrain east of Winchester, the lay of the land offered many advantages to a defender. The approach Sheridan's infantry would have to use consisted of the pike running from Berryville. The road passed through a narrow canyon, limiting the Federal opportunities to form massed lines of battle until almost on the Confederate lines. Redbud Run on the north and Abraham's Creek on the south further contained the battlefield. On September 18, Early received some disturbing indicators that Sheridan planned to attack him. Now

very concerned about the safety of his divided forces, he ordered both divisions of Rodes and Gordon back to Stephenson's Depot immediately.<sup>15</sup> Rodes complied and almost as soon as they arrived in Martinsburg, the 44th Georgia and Cook's Brigade reversed direction for Stephenson's Depot. The regiment camped there after dark that night.<sup>16</sup>

Rising with the dawn, the 44th Georgia prepared to leave at a moment's notice. The call to march came around 9 A.M. The regiment swung out on the Martinsburg Pike and continued to hurry south, arriving on the battlefield between 10 and 11 A.M. after marching through Winchester and turning east. Rodes immediately put the division into line in an interval between Ramseur and Gordon's divisions in a patch of woods northwest of Ramseur. This wooded area grew about 300 yards northwest of the Enos Dinkle farm on a slight slope north of a tributary of Abraham's Creek. Union troops moved out of the canyon and began deployments around noon on September 19. As this movement progressed, five batteries belonging to the Sixth Corps shelled the line. Concealment and cover offered by the woods shielded the 44th Georgia from losing few, if any, soldiers from this fire. The general infantry attack opened about 11:20 A.M. and for over an hour the Confederate line held its ground and then an opportune gap opened in the advancing Union columns.<sup>17</sup>

Rodes or Gordon, perhaps both, quickly spotted and assessed this as the time to counterattack. They hurriedly conferred and agreed. Although the Federal Sixth Corps' artillery batteries had hardly scratched the 44th Georgia thus far, they dealt the regiment a serious blow soon after this conference ended. A shell burst over General Rodes as he directed his brigades to move and a fragment shattered his skull.<sup>18</sup> Rodes fell from his

horse, mortally wounded. He had capably served the 44th Georgia as its division commander since early 1863 and led the division to its greatest battlefield successes at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. Letters reaching home in Georgia throughout his tenure commented frequently on Rodes' popularity, and his death deeply hurt the regimental rank and file who knew and respected him.

Gordon's counterattack at about half-past noon momentarily disjointed the alignment of Cook's Brigade, but once the officers straightened the lines, the brigade followed along in the counterattack on the left of Rodes' Division. This assault caught part of the gap between the Federal brigades of Russell and Ricketts and initially enjoyed success. It thwarted the Federal advance and moved about 500 yards toward the wooded area around Ash Hollow and the opening of the Berryville Road canyon. A deadly quartet of adversaries of the 44th Georgia at that moment waited in the Ash Hollow trees in the form of the 65th New York, 121st New York and the 2nd Connecticut Heavy Artillery operating as infantry. General Emory Upton commanded the force and Colonel, formerly Captain, Ranald McKenzie commanded the 2nd Connecticut. The co-architects of the disaster at Spotsylvania on May 10 now ordered their units to fire a series of rifle volleys that lashed the counterattack to a standstill. Upton then ordered a charge on the stunned Confederates. The hunters became the hunted and rapidly returned to their original positions.<sup>19</sup>

By 3 P.M., the general Federal advance threatened Rodes' Division as it fought to retain the woods where it began the battle. The 65th New York and 2nd Connecticut pressed into the woods after the Confederates, and fire from Cook's and other brigades

made them pay a heavy price with over 250 casualties shared between the two attacking Federal units. The 2nd Connecticut suffered over two thirds of these losses, reflecting its inexperience as infantry, but success rewarded its persistence. Around 4 P.M., the Sixth Corps renewed the attack. The 2nd Connecticut and 65th New York cleared most of the woods holding the initial position of the 44th Georgia in short order.<sup>20</sup> The regiment fell back to the southwest about 1200 yards with the rest of Rodes' Division to form a line behind the Smithfield house on the outskirts of Winchester and shelter behind some breast works built during the first year of the war.<sup>21</sup>

At this location, the Confederates rallied and formed a line in the shape of an inverted "L." This defensive position held for a brief period until attacking Federal cavalry broke the Confederates fighting north of Winchester on the Martinsburg Pike. Panic spread among the troops that Federal cavalry could cut them off east of Winchester. This spelled defeat for Early, and the majority of his forces moved quickly to the south down the Valley Pike to avoid capture.<sup>22</sup>

One 44th Georgia soldier described the Winchester fight as "hotly contested" before the Confederate retreat.<sup>23</sup> Hardly anyone in Rodes' Division could disagree. The division suffered 686 casualties, 300 more than any other division engaged.<sup>24</sup> The same soldier placed the blame on the Confederate cavalry for faltering and allowing the Federals to sweep down on the rear of Rodes' Division. Captain Joseph B. Reese of Company F candidly admitted the movement to the rear could not be done without confusion, an euphemism for a quick race to escape capture.<sup>25</sup>

In the fighting at Winchester, the 44th Georgia lost two men killed and 23 wounded. Two of the wounded suffered mortal injuries and would die of their wounds. The disorderly retreat resulted in 17 captured.<sup>26</sup> The killed included Captain John H. Harris, one of only two men in Company I to escape capture at Spotsylvania. The popular Harris chronicled the 44th Georgia's campaigns in a diary he kept that survived a war that he did not.

In a letter to a Putnam County newspaper, Captain Reese outlined most of the casualties his tiny company suffered at Winchester. He listed Privates William H. and James S. Fuller as wounded. Probably cousins, the men enlisted on the same day in 1862. William Fuller would lose part of his left hand and James had a gunshot in his right leg, the same limb of one of his three wounds at Chancellorsville. Surgeons furloughed both men home and both survived the war. Reese listed his First Sergeant, Charles R. Sanford, as missing. Sanford went down with two wounds in his head and hip, was separated from the company during the fighting, and advancing Federals captured him. Private Lucius J.B. Stanford received a severe wound to his left arm above the elbow, but shortly returned to the ranks. Private William J. Dupree exhibited a wound not commonly seen in the 44th Georgia. During the rush to retreat down the Valley Turnpike, a pursuing Federal cavalryman sabered him across his head. This compounded the three wounds he had suffered in the Wilderness fighting. The sword cut inflicted a very painful injury, but Dupree escaped to fight another day. Reese downplayed his own shoulder wound, his third suffered while leading the Putnam Volunteers.<sup>27</sup>

Colonel Peebles received an injury, the exact nature of it is unknown, that put him out of action for the rest of the war. Able to join the retreat, Peebles soon left the regiment and went home to Georgia to recover. The war ended before he could rejoin the 44th Georgia.<sup>28</sup> Peebles had been with the regiment in a officer position since the regiment's acceptance into service. He did not inspire the adoration accorded Colonel Robert Smith, nor did he possess the tactical brilliance of Colonel Samuel Lumpkin. However, he led the regiment very ably after Lumpkin's wounding at Gettysburg, and took it into and out of the Wilderness fighting. His leadership had been solid. Considering that all of Company A and part of Company I came from Henry County and with his professional, personal, and family ties to the adjacent counties fielding companies with the 44th Georgia, Peebles made a substantial contribution to holding the regiment together in camp, campaign, and combat.

Lieutenant Colonel Beck now assumed command of the 44th Georgia for the second time. Beck had begun his Confederate service as a sergeant in 1861, then enlistees from Greene County had elected him as the initial captain of Company K in March of the next year. He had a solid reputation and the regiment knew him well from his service as a regimental major and leading the regiment through the remainder of the combat at Spotsylvania and the stressful three months since Peebles' capture May 10 and return in August.<sup>29</sup>

## Fisher's Hill

Sheridan's forces half-heartedly pursued the retreating Confederates for about 15 miles until the Army of the Valley District reached positions on Fisher's Hill. There the Confederates occupied fieldworks that they had earlier constructed and hoped to gain some breathing time to reconstitute their forces. Sheridan's lack of a vigorous pursuit gave them some valuable time to sort themselves out. As the Confederates awaited the Federal attack on their Fisher's Hill line, some found time to write home. In a letter, Captain Reese wrote of heavy skirmishing on September 21 as the Federals attempted to assess the strength of the Confederate positions. He reported that hard work in the last couple of days had resulted in strong fieldworks behind which the 44th Georgia confidently awaited any enemy assault.<sup>30</sup> But, no matter how strong these fieldworks appeared to be, not enough soldiers remained on hand to man them effectively.<sup>31</sup> Already leading a depleted company, Reese mentioned that Private Thomas A. Morton lost his life on the skirmish lines that morning of September 22. Thomas had served in the 44th Georgia with his twin brother Charles, both enlisting on the exact same day in 1862. Charles went down wounded at Winchester, although he survived the war.<sup>32</sup> Reese hurriedly closed and posted the letter through army channels because the increase in Federal activity indicated an attack very soon.<sup>33</sup>

The Army of the Valley District previously occupied camps and position around Fisher's Hill. Leaders knew the terrain, and also presumably how to best use it in a defense. The steep hill complex of three peaks overlooked the east part of the battlefield. It and the winding Shenandoah River anchored the Confederate right flank. The Valley



Turnpike and the thoroughly destroyed Manassas Gap Railroad cut through the valley below Fisher's Hill running northeast to southwest. To the west of the railroad grade, the valley floor began sloping upward to Little North Mountain in a series of wooded hills and ravines. Tumbling Run fronted these low hill masses to the north.<sup>34</sup>

Early arranged his force in an east to west line from Fisher's Hill to Little North Mountain. He placed Rodes' old division on a group of low hills on the left center of his main line. He assigned General Stephen Ramseur to command the division. To the 44th Georgia and Cook's Brigade in general, Ramseur represented a known quality. He had commanded a brigade in Rodes' Division for the better part of 1863 and 1864. Frequently, his brigade fought on the flank of the regiment and held up its end of any bargain. Dismounted cavalry outposted Early's key left flank and extended it toward Little North Mountain. The commanding general routinely carried a dim view of cavalry and frequently remarked on its unreliability. As events turned out, he may have held a justified opinion as far as the Fisher's Hill battle. However, Early never explained why he posted a unit he regarded as unreliable on his critical left flank.<sup>35</sup>

Cook's Brigade occupied the right center of Ramseur's line with Battle's Brigade on its right and Cox' Brigade on its left. The divisional battleline began west of Middle Road, a narrower route that roughly paralleled the trace of the Valley Turnpike and railroad bed a half mile or so to the northwest. Battle held the lower ground while Cook fortified the area where the slope began to climb to Little North Mountain.<sup>36</sup>

September 21 saw an increase in skirmishing as Sheridan sought to rearrange his army for an attack the next day. Brigade and division commanders in the Federal force

advanced their skirmish-ers to take control of advantageous terrain near the Confederate lines through the day. That evening, Sheridan moved a large portion of the Sixth Corps into the wooded hills fronting Little North Mountain. General Early apparently took special note of these movements. He, unlike Reese, did not have a high level of confidence in his depleted force to fight a vastly superior foe no matter how strong the fieldworks appeared. Sometime during the afternoon he issued orders to retreat after dark. Preparations were made for the withdrawal, and it awaited only the coming of darkness. However, Sheridan would complete his preparations and attack with 35,000 against Early's approximately 10,000 late in the afternoon.<sup>37</sup>

At around 4 P.M., four brigades of the Sixth Corps attacked the dismounted Confederate cavalry's left flank from the woods on the slopes of Little North Mountain. The attack scattered three cavalry brigades and sent the cavalymen scrambling for their horses. Momentum picked up as the Federals swept down the hill. Ramseur pulled Cox' Brigade from his line and sent it to the northwest to block the attack threatening to roll up his line. Cook extended his already insufficient force to the left to fill the interval created by Cox' departure. The Federal brigades fronting Cook and Battle now rolled forward. Ricketts' two brigades from the Third Division, Sixth Corps engaged Cook's area of the line. The Georgians fired on the approaching Federals, but some evidence suggests that they did not hold their position for very long in the face of superior numbers and the knowledge that Battle had broken on their right.<sup>38</sup> The eleven Federal regiments in the two brigades Ricketts threw at Cook suffered just 10 killed and 70 wounded, an inexcusably low total for a seasoned brigade like Cook's fighting from behind strong

fieldworks to inflict on an attacker.<sup>39</sup> In an absolute understatement, General Ricketts later reported that “the loss in my division was very light on the 22d, considering the results obtained.”<sup>40</sup>

Captain Jackson, formerly of the 44th Georgia’s Company C and now the brigade commissary officer, observed in a letter written after the battle that the Federals almost completely surrounded Cook’s and one other brigade before the Confederates could escape from the trenchlines. He reported 15 pieces of artillery abandoned to the advancing Federals. As if his observations sounded too incredible to believe, even to himself, Jackson added, “I happened to be on the battlefield and saw it all.”<sup>41</sup>

Fortunately, Captain Reese posted his letter written on the morning of September 22 in time for the army mail system to begin its travel home to Georgia. Had Reese delayed mailing the letter until after the battle, it would have never reached home. Reese, one of the four men captured at Fisher’s Hill, would have carried the letter with him into captivity.

Despite Reese’s capture, a brief look at the 44th Georgia’s casualty total suggests that the regiment did not decisively engage the Federals attacking them at Fisher’s Hill. The regiment lost two men killed, six wounded, and five captured. Two of the wounded men would soon die from their injuries. Apparently the regiment vacated the fieldworks before the Federals could trap them there, given the small casualty total.

Color-bearer John C. Copelan was one of the fatalities at Fisher’s Hill. He may have been trying to rally the regiment by waving the battleflag and died at the entrenched position. Although Copelan fell, another soldier in the regiment secured and brought the

regimental colors off the field and kept them in the retreat as the Army of the Valley District scattered down the Valley Turnpike. Fortunately for the 44th Georgia, pursuing Federals stopped to reorganize very soon after capturing the fieldworks. Had they not done so, the regiment, and perhaps the entire army, could have been destroyed beyond recovery. The 44th Georgia made it to midway between Woodstock and Mount Jackson before stopping for the night.<sup>42</sup>

September 23 found the 44th Georgia continuing on the retreat with the army, marching toward Mount Jackson early in the morning. Here, the regiment faced about and formed a battleline there to delay the following Federal cavalry long enough for supplies and the wounded that could be moved to evacuate the storehouses and hospitals in Mount Jackson.<sup>43</sup> The march continued, and several men could not keep up. Six fell out during the course of the day and Federal cavalry scooped them up as prisoners of war.<sup>44</sup>

After remaining in a line of battle for most of September 23, the regiment camped outside Mount Jackson. The next day it retired through New Market and halted at the tiny hamlet of Tenth Legion. The 44th formed part of a battleline here to allow the army's supply train time to travel through Port Republic and transit Brown's Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The regiment retired through Port Republic and camped in the fork of the North and South Shenandoah Rivers for a couple of days.<sup>45</sup>

The latest reverse shook the 44th Georgia. Captain Jackson wrote home that the army had "been badly demoralized and stampeded twice." In the same letter Jackson called the rout at Fisher's Hill the "worst I ever saw."<sup>46</sup> The regiment would need time to

recover and rebuild its morale. Strangely, the regiment and the Army of the Valley District would have this time as a gift from a Federal army unwilling to pursue it to destruction. Sheridan stopped the pursuit on September 25, worried about his supply lines and the great distance of over 100 miles from Harper's Ferry. With General Grant's approval, he began to move back down the Shenandoah Valley, burning anything of value to the Confederate army. Early would make the most of this new lease of life and made plans to follow.<sup>47</sup>

### Victory, Defeat, Retreat

From its camp near Port Republic, the 44th Georgia joined an expedition south up the Valley to Waynesboro. Federal cavalry previously had damaged the railroad bridge there and a nearby railroad tunnel at Rockfish Gap. Already a proven talent at railroad destruction in three years of warfare, the 44th Georgia now assisted in repairing both structures from September 28 until September 30.<sup>48</sup> However, Early soon brought his force back from Brown's Gap down into the Valley and cautiously followed Sheridan north. Lee reinforced him with an additional division for this movement. Burning homes and barns charted the army's path, a fact all too plain for the 44th Georgia soldiers to see. Many felt the burning had carried no military purpose, and it only served to enrage the average Confederate soldier. When Early decided to attack Sheridan at the first opportunity, he would have the full support and enthusiasm of the rank and file.

The commanding general needed all the help he could get. The twin reverses of Winchester and Fisher's Hill cut into the strength of his already depleted Army of the

Valley District. Inspector General reports from visits conducted September 30 indicated that the 44th Georgia and Cook's Brigade needed rest, men, supplies, and equipment of all kinds. Although they had received some clothing through army channels, the men in the brigade needed uniform jackets and trousers very badly. Shoes seemed adequately supplied, although many would be worn out by another series of campaigns and could not be replaced.<sup>49</sup>

Only two field grade officer remained in Cook's entire brigade. Presumably Lieutenant Colonel Beck of the 44th Georgia was one of these. The inspecting officer commented on the lack of officers hindering the efficiency of the units, and in fact some of the 44th Georgia companies did not have a single officer present. The effect of the defeats at Winchester and Fisher's Hill on morale and discipline clearly showed.<sup>50</sup> The 44th Georgia began the month of September with a field strength of approximately 150 rifles. After a month of campaign and two battles, the regiment now numbered close to ninety men, an average of less than ten men per company. Men recovering from minor wounds that month and other men rejoining the regiment after recuperating from injuries suffered during the summer still did not take the strength over 100 soldiers fit for duty in the field.<sup>51</sup>

The 44th Georgia spent the first six days of October at Mount Sidney watching a Federal force in Harrisonburg. On the next day the regiment moved back through New Market, where it camped until around October 12. Early had his mind set to attack the Federals where he found them.<sup>52</sup> On October 10, the Federal army camped along the banks of Cedar Creek, just north of Strasburg, on a familiar campground for them. The

force consisted of the Sixth, Eighth, and Nineteenth Corps with a supporting cavalry component of three divisions. The Eighth Corps occupied the left of the Federal line, facing south along the northern bank of the Shenandoah River. During October 13, as Early closed on the Federals, a part of his force brushed against his opponent in a small skirmish and seemingly forfeited the element of surprise.<sup>53</sup>

Early still determined to attack the Federal right flank, but on October 17 General Gordon presented his proposal for a plan to turn the Federal left. Gordon climbed Shenandoah Peak on Massanutten Mountain to survey the Union dispositions earlier in the day. He convinced his commander that the Federal left could be assailed successfully with a surprise night march and river crossing. Early agreed, and ordered the plan put into motion after nightfall on October 18.<sup>54</sup> Gordon's audacious plan entailed a night march by three divisions east along a path along the base of Massanutten Mountain between the massif and the Shenandoah River. On reaching the lightly picketed Bowman's Ford, scouts would try to noiselessly capture the Federals watching the ford. If successful, this would put three divisions in place on the north bank of the Shenandoah River and ready to attack the unsuspecting Federal left flank in conjunction with a frontal attack from the rest of the army before daybreak.<sup>55</sup>

Cook's Brigade would make the night march with Ramseur's Division. Orders instructed the officers to leave their swords and all soldiers to remove their canteens in camp to prevent any rattle of equipment during the march.<sup>56</sup> After nightfall, the columns set out. No one in the marching brigades carried a capped rifle for fear of an accidental

discharge that would alert Union sentries. The officers instructed the men to speak only in whispers, if at all.<sup>57</sup>

Ramseur's Division followed Gordon's. Battle's Brigade led the division with Cook following him. At 8 P.M., the march halted for an hour by the Valley Turnpike because of suspicions that the move had been discovered. It had not, however, and the movement resumed, crossing a stone bridge over Cedar Creek. Officers sized the marching men into single file for the next phase. A narrow footpath wound around the base of the mountain, in some places only one marching man wide. The march continued until very near the bridge carrying the Manassas Gap Railroad over the Shenandoah River. An extended halt allowed the regimental commanders to form columns again on a wider trail and for the units in the rear to close up. About 1 A.M. the head of the movement started again, following the bed of the railroad for about 1,500 yards.<sup>58</sup>

Here began the most dangerous part of the approach. Bowman's Ford lay just 100 yards ahead and the entire three divisions of Confederates paused here until the time to rush the ford. Two Federal cavalymen sat on their horses in the middle of the river as pickets. Any alarm given by these men threatened the whole attack plan. The 44th Georgia soldiers rested by lying down in the cold grass as the hours of darkness ticked slowly by.<sup>59</sup>

Officers and sergeants roused the sleeping soldiers quietly around 4 A.M., formed them into two large columns, and closed as near to the river as they dared. At 4:30 A.M. the time for attack arrived. A cavalry detachment with the march splashed into the river to drive in the Federal picket post. Only a couple of scattered shots rang out. The 44th



Georgia men plunged into the icy, waist-deep river and waded across. The brigades formed up on the opposite bank and hurried up a farm lane past another Bowman farm. At the intersection of this farm lane and the road to Buckton Station, the three divisions formed a line of battle. Cooks Brigade and the 44th Georgia would go into this fight from a position just west of the John Cooley house.<sup>60</sup>

Gordon selected the farm lane and the Cooley farmhouse as points of reference for the surprise attack. His leading brigades knew that, upon reaching the white farmhouse, the flank of the Federals would be turned and the Valley Pike lay just a half of a mile distant. No additional reconnaissance would be needed. The battle line formed by 5 A.M. and advanced in the early morning fog to seek and strike the Federal flank.<sup>61</sup> Battle made contact first with elements of the Federal Eighth Corps' left flank. The 44th Georgia made contact soon after that. Cook attacked the front of Colonel J. Howard Kitching's 6th New York Heavy Artillery serving as infantry and Colonel Hiram F. Devol's brigade of the 23rd Ohio, 36th Ohio, 13th West Virginia, and 5th West Virginia Battalion.<sup>62</sup>

Awakened by the sound of firing at dawn, the sleepy Federals formed a line of battle just outside their camps in the immediate vicinity of the Bowman family cemetery, and lay down to await the Confederate attack. No one could see through the thick fog, but the escalation of rifle fire told them the attack moved rapidly in their direction. The 36th Ohio threw out some skirmishers, but they ran right into Cook's oncoming Georgians who scattered most of them and captured the rest.<sup>63</sup>

Battle worked around to the rear of the two Federal brigades, while Cook attacked in front. The 44th Georgia helped to inflict some of the 230 casualties the two Federal units suffered during the fighting, and assisted in the three Confederate divisions breaking this Federal line with very little trouble.<sup>64</sup> The retreating bluecoats spilled across the Valley Turnpike, only some fifty yards in the rear of their line. Flushed with success, Cook's Brigade crossed over the Valley Turnpike within sight of Mile Post 14 and pressed on. The Georgians met almost no resistance and captured cannons, wagons, and caissons.<sup>65</sup> The Eighth Corps had been routed before sunrise.

Once across the Turnpike, the regiment brushed against the left flank of the battleline formed by the Nineteenth Corps. This position slowed down the whole of Ramseur's Division for over 30 minutes. The Federal artillery fired at the Confederate attack formations, but smoke and fog kept this fire from being accurate or effective. Ramseur brought up artillery of his own and ordered the advance to continue. The 44th Georgia went forward once more. The attack of the regiment passed through the Belle Grove mansion property and moved on toward the northwest, crossing the Hottle's Mill road about 7:45 A.M. The advancing divisions encountered the line of the Sixth Corps and went to ground for over an hour while Confederate artillery massed along the Valley Turnpike. When shelling from these batteries forced the Sixth Corps off their position, only two hours had elapsed since the Confederates crossed the Shenandoah.<sup>66</sup>

Cook joined in with elements from Gordon's Division attacking the subsequent Sixth Corps position on Red Hill. The Federal line here held on longer than others earlier

in the morning, but gave way just the same. Cook's Brigade after some hard fighting finally reached the Middletown cemetery hill and Old Forge Road about 10 A.M.<sup>67</sup>

The advance formally ended about 11:30 A.M. along Old Forge Road on some rising ground west of the northern limit of Middletown.<sup>68</sup> Ramseur took some time realigning and tidying up brigades disorganized by the speed and distance of the attack. Once complete, he pushed his line about another half mile north to make the best use of the terrain. The third position of the Union Sixth Corps lay ahead of him approximately a mile away.<sup>69</sup> The men paused here for nearly three hours awaiting the order to attack and finish off the Federal army. That order would not come. The Battle of Cedar Creek began that morning without General Sheridan. He had been absent on a higher headquarters visit and heard the sound of firing in the direction of his army. He immediately began a fast ride toward the battle, rallying retreating troops and stopping the panic. His ride is credited with saving the day for the Northern troops.

With Sheridan now on the battlefield, the prospects for the crushing surprise victory that Early needed began to fade. Early elected to defend for the moment and neglected to follow up the attack, a fact having a profound effect on the morale of the Confederate soldiers. Sheridan organized his troops for a counterattack, and at 3:30 P.M. it started to roll down on the Army of the Valley District.<sup>70</sup>

Advancing Federal troops drove in the skirmishers protecting the front of Cook's Brigade, now posted on the lane running west from David J. Miller's Mill on Meadow Brook. The Confederate line held, but General Ramseur could see the position he held could be turned by the attack. He ordered a withdrawal to a stone wall 200 yards to the

rear. This line held only briefly because supporting troops on the left collapsed. Ramseur attempted to rally them, but fell mortally wounded. Cook's Brigade joined in the wholesale retreat from the plains northwest of Middletown.<sup>71</sup>

After being so close to a complete triumph, the Army of the Valley District nearly disintegrated. Waves of Union infantry overwhelmed each attempt by Ramseur's Division to face about and defend. The Confederate soldiers thought of only two things: survival and escape. Union cavalry from the brigade commanded by General Thomas C. Devin rode into the retreating Confederates. The brigade, composed of the 1st New York Dragoons, 4th New York, 6th New York, and 17th Pennsylvania cavalry regiments, harassed elements of Ramseur's Division continuously south along the Valley Turnpike and to the Stickley Bridge over Cedar Creek.<sup>72</sup> Scores of Confederate fugitives fell captive to the pursuing Union horsemen.

Direct evidence indicates that the 6th New York Cavalry encountered some or part of the 44th Georgia during the retreat. Third Corporal Francis M. Cochran of Company G replaced Sergeant John C. Copelan as the regimental color-bearer after Copelan's death at Fisher's Hill.<sup>73</sup> The exact place and circumstances surrounding the loss of the regiment's battle flag at Cedar Creek are not known, but it is clear that Chief Bugler Thomas M. Wells of the 6th New York captured Corporal Cochran with the 44th's flag in his possession. Wells received the Medal of Honor for capturing the 44th Georgia's banner, the second time in five months where the 44th Georgia lost its battle flag.<sup>74</sup>

About 200 men from the brigades of Cook and Grimes attempted a stand a half mile north of Strasburg at Hupp's Hill. Retreating Confederate troops shouted that Federal cavalry followed them closely and were about to charge down on them. This last line evaporated, perhaps without a shot being fired, and the men streamed to the rear to try to cross over the Shenandoah River. Officers could only follow in their wake. Early himself attempted to rally the men at Fisher's Hill and succeeded on getting some men stopped as a semblance of unit order returned. Many soldiers did not stop until reaching Edinburg, some fifteen miles south of Strasburg. On October 20, the infantry reassembled in its old camps in New Market and the panic largely subsided. The 44th Georgia stayed there recovering from the battle until mid-November.<sup>75</sup>

Cedar Creek cost the 44th Georgia two killed and ten wounded. During the retreat, regimental organization and the tired men broke down, contributing to ten lost as prisoners of war. By the time the last regimental survivor straggled in to New Market, the regiment probably numbered no more than eventy-five men present and fit for duty. Thirty-three-year-old Company K Private James B. Dunn took a wound in his right arm. Surgeons at the hospital amputated it at the shoulder, finishing him for the war. Private Burrell Green Rivers suffered a wound at Fisher's Hill on September 22, yet remained with Company H. His persistence and patriotism resulted in a fractured skull at Cedar Creek, possibly from a Federal cavalry saber. Company C had three men wounded. Private Needam F. Hunt went down with an arm wound that also necessitated amputation. He fell into the hands of the Federals who cut off his arm at a field hospital and sent him to the Point Lookout, Maryland, military prison until he went home on an

exchange of wounded prisoners. His brother Wiley, who had been captured at Spotsylvania, would not survive captivity, dying on January 5, 1865.<sup>76</sup>

#### Leaving the Valley. . . for the Last Time

On November 10, the 44th Georgia again embarked on campaign, marching down the Valley 22 miles to camp south of Woodstock. The march featured a new division commander to replace Ramseur, who died on October 20 in Federal hands. General Bryan Grimes, another North Carolinian, moved up from a brigade command in the division. He would be the division commander for the 44th Georgia for the rest of the war. The next day the army moved over the battlefield at Cedar Creek and ejected some Union pickets from Middletown. Grimes' Division camped west of the Valley Turnpike near the Vacluse crossroads north of Middletown. Some skirmishing went on with the Federals, but no major action developed. Early retired back up the Valley on November 12 to the Fisher's Hill camps, and then on to Stony Creek at Edinburg the next day. November 14 found the 44th Georgia at New Market where the regiment would stay in camp about three or four miles southwest of the town until November 22.<sup>77</sup>

Two divisions of Federal cavalry operated in the Woodstock area and kept moving south. Early sent three infantry division to oppose them on November 22, including Grimes' Division and the 44th Georgia. In a very busy day, the regiment helped form a battleline near Hawkinstown that in a light, obscure skirmish pushed the Federal cavalry back north of Hawkinstown. The men then marched back to camp, a round trip for the day of twenty-five miles.<sup>78</sup> Despite the need for the Army of the Valley

District to continue protecting the upper Shenandoah from Union operations, the operations around Petersburg demanded that Lee call back some troops. Grimes' Division left the Valley, never to return, in the first or second week of December. The division detrained in Richmond and moved immediately to the Petersburg lines in the area between Hatcher's Run and the Boydton Plank Road. From here and winter camps nearby, the 44th Georgia prepared for what was to be the last months of the war.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jeffry D. Wert, *From Winchester to Cedar Creek: The Shenandoah Campaign of 1864* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: South Mountain Press, 1987; reprint, New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1989), 28-32

<sup>2</sup>Henderson 728.

<sup>3</sup>Warner, 60.

<sup>4</sup>OR, 43.1, 1026.

<sup>5</sup>Henderson, 774-784.

<sup>6</sup>Wert, 38.

<sup>7</sup>Reese, 9 September 1864.

<sup>8</sup>OR, 43.1, 1026.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Thomas, 23.

<sup>11</sup>Reese, 9 September 1864.

<sup>12</sup>Jackson, 18 September 1864.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Wert, 44.

<sup>15</sup>Thomas A. Lewis, *Shenandoah in Flames: The Valley Campaign of 1864* (Alexandria, Virginia : Time-Life Books, 1987), 109-112.

- <sup>16</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup>Wert, 44.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., 52-65
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid., 65.
- <sup>20</sup>Ibid., 66-70
- <sup>21</sup>*OR*, 43.1, 176-177.
- <sup>22</sup>Thomas, 25.
- <sup>23</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 99, No. 1.
- <sup>24</sup>Reese, 22 September 1864.
- <sup>25</sup>Wert, 103-104.
- <sup>26</sup>Reese, 22 September 1864.
- <sup>27</sup>Henderson, 716-838.
- <sup>28</sup>Reese, 22 September 864.
- <sup>29</sup>Henderson, 728.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid., 828.
- <sup>31</sup>Reese, 22 September 1864.
- <sup>32</sup>Jackson, 25 september 1864.
- <sup>33</sup>Henderson, 793.
- <sup>34</sup>Reese, 22 September 1864.
- <sup>35</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 82, No. 11.
- <sup>36</sup>Wert, 110.
- <sup>37</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 82, No. 11.
- <sup>38</sup>Wert, 110-15.



<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 110-124.

<sup>40</sup>OR, 43.1, 120.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 221.

<sup>42</sup>Jackson, 25 September 1864.

<sup>43</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>44</sup>Thomas, 26.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>47</sup>Tyhommas, 26..

<sup>48</sup>Thomas, 27

<sup>49</sup>OR, 43.1, 1012.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid, 600-601.

<sup>51</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>52</sup>Thomas, 27.

<sup>53</sup>Lewis, 140.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 141.

<sup>55</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 82, # 9.

<sup>56</sup>Thomas, 28.

<sup>57</sup>John B. Gordon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903; reprint Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State Univeristy Press, 1993), 337 (page citations refer to reprint edition).

<sup>58</sup>OR, 43.1, 598.

<sup>59</sup>Gordon, 337.

<sup>60</sup>OR, 43.1, 598.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Theodore C. Mahr, *The Battle of Cedar Creek: Showdown in The Shenandoah, October 1-30*, 2nd ed. (Lynchburg, Virginia: E. H. Howard, Inc., 1992), 130-132.

<sup>63</sup>OR, 43.1, 403-405.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 135.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 598.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 599

<sup>67</sup>Mahr, 260-280..

<sup>68</sup>OR, 43.1, 599.

<sup>69</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 82, #9.

<sup>70</sup>OR, 43.1, 599.

<sup>71</sup>Mahr. 260-280.

<sup>72</sup>*Atlas*, Plate 82. No. 9.

<sup>73</sup>Henderson, 797.

<sup>74</sup>*Medal of Honor Recipients, 1863-1973* (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1973), 259.

<sup>75</sup>OR, 43.1, 581-599.

<sup>76</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>77</sup>OR, 43.1, 582-585.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid. 585.

<sup>79</sup>Pulaski Cowper, *Extracts of Letters of Major-General Bryan Grimes to His Wife* (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1986), 89-90.

## PART IV: 1865--THE LAST TIMES TOGETHER

### CHAPTER 12

#### SEEING THE WAR THROUGH

##### Final Winter and 1864 in Retrospect

December 31, 1864, closed out the worst battlefield year for the 44th Georgia. The year had begun with the drawn battle of the Wilderness, followed by disaster at Spotsylvania. After marching miles in hot dust chasing Grant's flank moves, the regiment faced about and moved off toward the Shenandoah Valley. The brief threat to Washington paled beside the triple defeats of Winchester, Fisher's Hill, and Cedar Creek.

The thirty-nine regimental men died on battlefields, and twenty-one later died in hospitals from their wounds. Of the 125 men wounded, many went home with discharges from active service, and the few recovering and rejoining the regiment did not offset battlefield losses. Over 265 men of the 44th Georgia sat in Federal prison camps at the close of the year. A small number returned to Confederate authorities in a prisoner exchange and a mere handful of them elected to forego their exchanged prisoner furlough. By the time the exchange furloughs expired, General Sherman's campaign had reached the Carolinas and cut off the way back to Virginia. The 44th Georgia walked out of camps along the Rapidan River in May with a strength approaching 580 veterans. At the end of 1864, barely eighty men remained, an attrition rate of approximately 85 percent.<sup>1</sup> But despite these battlefield losses of friends and family, a series of military

reverses, and the dimming prospect of a favorable war resolution, the 44th Georgia remnant's cohesive spirit still held on.

Desertion affected the 44th Georgia only minimally in 1864 as just two men deserted the regiment during the entire year. Private James M. Coleman from Company E deserted at Morton's Ford on the Rapidan in early May. Coleman had served with the regiment since its inception, but had no close blood relatives with him. Musician George W. Williams, also from Company E, deserted at Martinsburg in the three weeks prior to Winchester. He had joined the regiment as a conscript in early 1863 and, like Coleman, had no close blood relatives in the regiment. Both men took the oath of allegiance very shortly after entering Union lines as a deserter.<sup>2</sup>

Of over 265 44th Georgia soldiers in captivity, only four besides Coleman and Williams took the oath of allegiance in 1864. Private William F. Wallis of Company D and Corporal Joshua G. Dodson of Company G became prisoners of war under similar circumstances. Confederate surgeons furloughed both of them home to Clayton and Spalding counties to recuperate from wounds. General Sherman's troops operating around Atlanta captured them and, after approximately a month in captivity, both signed the oath. It is worth noting that they were not confined with their comrades taken prisoner in Virginia, and that Dodson is the only 44th Georgia soldier higher than the rank of private to sign the oath while the war continued.<sup>3</sup> Wallis did not return to Clayton County after the war to make a living. He moved to his birthplace in Hall County, a considerable distance away.<sup>4</sup>

One private from Company I was the only 44th Georgia soldier confined with his comrades in captivity to sign the oath. Private Morris Leon lived in Kings County, New York, until shortly before the war when he relocated to Georgia to find work. Upton's attack swept him up on May 10. Perhaps he did not feel any particular kinship with the men captured with him and also felt that he could not endure the hardships of prison camp. He signed the oath on February 13, 1865 and Federal authorities released him with the condition that he stay out of the Southern states until the war ended.<sup>5</sup> Leon apparently felt some stigma from signing the oath and, although he returned to Georgia, he moved after the war a considerable distance from his 44th Georgia comrades to Augusta.<sup>6</sup>

Private Jarrett L. Waller of Company E exhibited behavior rarely seen in the 44th Georgia. He joined the regiment in May 1862 and appears to have served without any close relative. Federal cavalry took him prisoner at Winchester, and he signed the oath the next month. He volunteered to serve in the Federal forces, one of only two 44th Georgia soldiers ever to do so, by joining the 4th U.S. Infantry. Waller deserted his new army after eight months.<sup>7</sup> He apparently never returned to Spalding County after the war since the regimental section of the brigade history, written by the 44th Georgia veterans, lists him as "fate unknown."<sup>8</sup>

Private James C. Alford signed the oath shortly after being captured in the retreat from Fisher's Hill. Like Waller, he agreed to join the Federal army. He and Waller may have agreed to support each other since they signed the oath and enlisted in Federal service the same day on October 15 in Washington.<sup>9</sup> Alford, from Company F, became

one of the few men deserting or signing the oath to return to his home county and live after the war. Lightning struck and killed him a few years after the close of hostilities.<sup>10</sup>

The near absence of desertions and oath signings illustrate how tightly the 44th Georgia bonded, even in the face of hardship and military adversity. Throughout the course of the war, only four men deserted the regiment while confronting the enemy. All signed the oath. Eleven more signed the oath to gain release from prison camp. The four deserters represent a desertion rate of 0.3 percent for the entire war, an incredibly low figure. Likewise the total number of men signing the oath represents only 1.1 percent for the whole war. Three companies (B, H, and K) experienced zero desertions or oath signings.

#### Fort Delaware

At least 200 men from the 44th Georgia passed into captivity during Upton's attack at Spotsylvania. From the battlefield, their captors forced the men to double quick march for about two miles before halting by the side of the road for the night. The next day, with the men still under control of the 44th Georgia officers, Federal escorts took them within six miles of Fredericksburg. On May 12 the prisoner of war column made three miles to camp in a driving rainstorm in the yard of Salem Church just west of Fredericksburg. May 13 found them in Fredericksburg guarded by the 20th New York Infantry.<sup>11</sup>

Federal authorities separated the officers from enlisted men probably that day and the officers boarded a steamboat on May 13 bound for a Northern prison camp. The

privates, and presumably noncommissioned officers as well, remained at a vast prisoner of war holding area at Belle Plain about seven miles south of Fredericksburg on the Rappahannock River. They would not begin their voyage north for at least several more days.<sup>12</sup>

The steamboat carrying the officers worked its way down the Rappahannock and out into Chesapeake Bay for the next four days. On May 18 the ship turned up the mouth of the Delaware River early in the morning and anchored off an imposing masonry fort in the middle of the river about noon. The 44th Georgia officers now took their first look at what would be home for most of them for the next eleven months. Fort Delaware occupied Pea Patch Island in the center of the river, about equidistant from the Delaware and New Jersey shores. Federal authorities pressed the fort and surrounding island into service as a prison camp. The 44th Georgia officers moved into a series of wooden barracks outside the fort's walls.<sup>13</sup>

The privates in the regiment arrived around May 20 with a host of other Confederate soldiers captured at Spotsylvania. They occupied another series of barracks segregated from the 44th Georgia officers. Apparently the Federal commandant limited most casual contact between the men and officers. Lieutenant Levi Smith of Company I called the limiting of contact with his men the greatest hardship of prison life. However, Federal guards could not limit all contact. Smith did learn of Private Leon signing the oath and vehemently condemned it in his diary.<sup>14</sup>

Life settled into a boring routine broken only by the death of a comrade or some piece of adverse war news that the captors happily shared with the prisoners. News

included the defeat at Winchester, Sherman's burning of Atlanta in November, Governor Joe Brown's mobilization of the Georgia militia, and the news of Sherman's steady path of destruction as he marched through the 44th Georgia's home counties on the way to Savannah.<sup>15</sup>

An event in late August probably strengthened the regiment's united front. Federal officials decided to retaliate against the Confederate practice of confining Federal prisoners of war in areas of Charleston, South Carolina, where shells from the Union blockading fleet could injure them. The prison administration selected about 600 Confederate officers from the Fort Delaware population and sent them by boat to Charleston harbor where they would be put in a stockade on an island frequently shelled by Confederate artillery.

The 44th Georgia contributed four popular officers to the group soon to become known as the "Immortal 600." Captains James H. Connally (E) and Joseph A. Edmondson (G), along with Lieutenants Napoleon B. Durham (C) and David W. Goodwin (K) left in late August for a very disagreeable trip and confinement around Charleston for many weeks. Opinion throughout the regiment labeled this Federal act as a barbaric breach of the etiquette of warfare and all the 44th Georgia rank and file shared concern for their safety. Although the four officers returned safely, the incident both enraged and united the regiment.<sup>16</sup>

The seemingly constant parade of remains to the Finn's Point cemetery established on the New Jersey shore across from Fort Delaware presented a hard test for the regiment's cohesion. Thirty 44th Georgia men died at Fort Delaware, a mortality rate



of 13 percent. Causes of death: smallpox--thirteen, chronic diarrhea--four typhoid fever--two, inflammation of the lungs--one, abscessed hip--one, measles--one, inflammation of the brain--one, and erysipelas--one. Six men had no causative disease listed.<sup>17</sup> However, the family ties that kept the regiment strong on the battlefield appear to have directly contributed to the survival rate. Of the nineteen pairs of brothers that entered captivity, death erased only two pairs with the death of both brothers. The other seventeen pairs remarkably lost neither sibling.<sup>18</sup>

On February 27, 1865, a large lot of the regiment's enlisted men received paroles and boarded a vessel for a prisoner exchange to be conducted at Aiken's Landing on the James River downstream from Richmond. The exchange apparently included none of the 44th Georgia officers. After receiving the men during three day period from March 10-12, Confederate military authorities sent them home on prisoner of war furloughs for a period of thirty days.<sup>19</sup> A handful of men returning from Fort Delaware rejoined the 44th Georgia in the trenches around Petersburg. The majority traveled home to see if their farms survived Sherman's operations and to provide for their families. By the time the thirty day furlough expired, Lee had surrendered at Appomattox and the Confederate military situation had deteriorated to the point of futility.

For the 44th Georgia officers left behind, the debate over the oath of allegiance gives some insight to the character of the regimental leadership and the sense of loyalty that the men felt to their regiment and service. Prison guards communicated the news of Lee's surrender on April 9 and fired gun salutes in celebration. This event caused many

officers and men at Fort Delaware to petition for and sign the Oath, but the 44th officers refused.<sup>20</sup>

The news from North Carolina announcing the surrender of the last large operational Confederate army arrived at Fort Delaware on April 26. With the way seemingly clear to honorably sign the oath, most 44th Georgia officers still declined to sign the paper. Acrimonious debates raged for over a week in the prison barracks until the first week of May when the officers finally signed the oath as a group. The Georgians applied for their release, but freedom would be slow in coming. Not until June 8 did President Andrew Johnson announce the freedom of all Confederate officers under the grade of major. The 44th Georgia officers along with 400 others boarded a train on June 17. The rails took them on a circuitous route home through Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, Louisville, Nashville, Chattanooga, and finally their homes in Georgia in late June.<sup>21</sup>

### The Last Hope

While their comrades in captivity endured a harsh winter in the middle of the Delaware River, the soldiers in Cook's Brigade relocated to the Richmond area. Their first mission after detraining from the Shenandoah Valley on December 17 and 18 was to help extend Lee's Petersburg lines to the southwest in the last two weeks of December.<sup>22</sup> The brigade operated in the vicinity west of the Boydton Plank Road and north of Hatcher's Run about three miles from the city. Control of this area prevented Federal encroachment of the Southside Railroad, the only remaining outside rail link to

Petersburg from the lower Confederate states.<sup>23</sup> The 44th Georgia established camp late in the month close to Dunlop's Depot, now Dunlop, north of Petersburg on the south bank of Swift Creek. From this camp Cook's Brigade, by using the railroad, could quickly reinforce lines protecting Petersburg in a number of places, or even shift north of the James River. The men named their winter quarters Camp Rodes in honor of their former division commander.<sup>24</sup>

The soldiers complained of few amusements, and the availability of food only offset these complaints slightly. The regimental commissary drew and issued hardtack army bread, pork, rice, sugar, and coffee for a New Year's Day meal on January 2. The food items, except the hardtack, found general approval for quality, but no one seemed satisfied with the amount issued. Any amusement or entertainment in Camp Rodes would have been welcome to divert attention from Sherman's recently concluded march from Atlanta to Savannah. All hoped that Confederate forces in Georgia and the Carolinas could consolidate and stop Sherman before he destroyed more property. One soldier in the 44th Georgia wrote home that while he suspected severe devastation in Georgia from Sherman, he hoped that Georgians could bear up as well as the Virginians who had hosted four years of war so far.<sup>25</sup>

Several weeks passed in the winter camp with little action except false alarms on January 30 and February 5 to break the monotony. The men whiled away time sitting and talking before fires in their winter huts. Occasionally a large cannon or mortar boomed in the distance or scattered firing between the pickets erupted, but generally it remained quiet in the 44th Georgia's sector. By late February news arrived of large prisoner

exchanges. The 44th Georgia leadership hoped the exchanges would quickly return men to the ranks. Without more soldiers, and soon, the 44th Georgia stood a strong chance of involuntary consolidation with another Georgia unit and losing its identity. The men also hotly debated the idea of enrolling black soldiers to serve in the manpower crisis for the Confederacy.<sup>26</sup>

On February 24 the 44th Georgia moved with the rest of Cook's Brigade to the south bank of the Appomattox River. The regiment marched to Sutherland's Station in response to Union troop movements in the vicinity of Dinwiddie Court House. Heavy rains falling after February 25 prevented any movement for several days and a fight did not develop. The 44th Georgia constructed a field camp probably southeast of Sutherland's Station and awaited enemy developments until March 12.<sup>27</sup> Inspector General reports for February 25 at Sutherland's Station put the strength of Cook's Brigade at 40 officers and 500 men present fit for the field. This put Cook leading the smallest brigade in Grimes' Division headed into the month of March by far.<sup>28</sup>

The 44th Georgia numbered barely 120 officers and men,<sup>29</sup> the strength for a new company in 1862. Appropriately enough, at their head stood a former company commander, Captain T. R. Daniel from Company D. Captain Daniel assumed command temporarily because of Lieutenant Colonel Beck's serious illness developed during the February maneuvering. Beck applied for a sick furlough to travel home to regain his health and departed for Georgia in early March on thirty days' sick leave.<sup>30</sup>

March 12 brought another false alarm. Grimes' Division left camp at 4 A.M. and marched to a pontoon bridge over the Appomattox River before a courier reached Grimes

with the order to reverse course and return. The disgruntled men filed back over the muddy roads to their camps around the Southside Railroad. On March 14, the men left Sutherland's Station for the last time. Grimes received orders to relieve Johnson's Division in the Petersburg trenches. The division completed the march by midnight. The men rose early the next day to examine the terrain they now defended and could see Federal soldiers clearly across the "no man's land." Proximity of the lines meant nearly constant exchanges of rifle fire between the opposing picket lines.<sup>31</sup>

### Fort Stedman

With the huge forces of General Grant pinning his small army in the Petersburg trenches, General Lee resolved to do something to break the stalemate on terms favorable to the Confederacy. If he waited until the campaign season, Grant's superior forces would eventually crush him. Lee charged his newest and youngest corps commander, General John B. Gordon, to select a point in the Union lines where an attack could be successful. After intense study, Gordon decided on Fort Stedman as a critical point to assail just over 250 yards across "no man's land" from Colquitt's Salient in the Confederate trenches. Cannon in Fort Stedman covered the ground and gunners stood with lanyards in hand day and night.<sup>32</sup> The guns contained canister ammunition, and the gunners had instructions to fire on any suspicious noises.

Abatis, pickets, fraises, deep ditches, and a steep wall barred direct access to the fort. Picket posts overwatched the abatis to give early warning of any attack. Behind the pickets stood a stout line of fraises, an obstacle of chest-high rows of sharpened logs set

in the ground at an angle toward the Confederate lines.<sup>33</sup> After this came a ditch backed by Fort Stedman's outer wall thirteen feet high.<sup>34</sup>

General Gordon selected the early morning hours of March 25 for the attack. To ensure security, Gordon concealed the assault troops by moving them well after dark to assembly areas behind Colquitt's Salient. Cook received word on the afternoon of March 24 to move his brigade, along with the rest of Grimes' Division, to the low ground around Blandford Cemetery and be in position no later than 3 A.M. The brigade moved quickly on a route through the outskirts of Petersburg and closed on the cemetery after dark. This position concealed the attackers from Union observation as they waited and received their instructions for the attack.<sup>35</sup>

To breach Stedman's defenses, Gordon planned one of the most complicated assaults of the Civil War. In the first phase, teams of soldiers would clear lanes through friendly obstacles beginning after dark on March 24. Once the teams completed their work, Confederates posing as deserters would approach the picket posts covering Fort Stedman and overpower them. Next would come a specially picked force of 50 strong men armed only with axes. Their task entailed clearing gaps in the abatis and cutting lanes through the fraise stakes after which they would join the assault waves.<sup>36</sup>

Hard on the heels of the axmen came three assault parties of one hundred men each. Men from elite sharpshooter companies made up most of these three elements and the 44th Georgia undoubtedly had many representatives among them. Gordon assigned them the task of rushing around Fort Stedman in the initial wave, then continuing on and infiltrating past Union supporting lines to capture rearward positions. Cook and his

fellow brigades would follow the ax and assault elements as the second brigade through the gap behind General Terry's North Carolina brigade.<sup>37</sup>

At 4 A.M. on March 25, the attack on Fort Stedman began. Moving through lanes cleared in friendly and enemy obstacles and initially undetected by forward picket posts, the assault detachments swiftly infiltrated toward the fort. Supporting forces captured the earthwork with fewer losses than hoped in a matter of minutes. Cook directed the brigade on General Grimes' orders past Fort Stedman and to a small elevation behind the fort by about 300 yards. After working its way out to this position in the early morning light, Cook's Brigade received Federal cannon and rifle fire from in front, both flanks and, some soldiers also later reported, the rear as well. Cook suffered a wound in his arm as the men fought from this position.<sup>38</sup>

After the initial success, the assault lost momentum. Cook soon ordered the 44th Georgia and his other three regiments back from their position beyond Fort Stedman to a ditch parallel to the trenches connecting the fortification with other positions. Here, Cook awaited more orders and tried to hold the bit of captured ground in the face of increasing Federal counterattacks. Couriers arrived with orders from Grimes directing him to withdraw to the Confederate trenches around 9 A.M. One soldier remarked that the movement back to the Confederate trenches posed a greater hazard than the morning's attack.<sup>39</sup>

Losses for the regiment totaled ten wounded, one of them mortally. Twelve men either separated from the regiment in the confusion before dawn or did not want to take the risk of retreating under fire. Federal soldiers captured them as they retook Fort

Stedman and the trenches around it.<sup>40</sup> The regiment evacuated its wounded survivors back to a series of government and private hospitals in the Petersburg area. Captain T. R. Daniel became the fourth 44th Georgia commander lost in battle as counterattacking Federal troops captured him around the earth face of Fort Stedman.<sup>41</sup>

General Cook detailed Captain John Tucker from the 21st Georgia to command the eighty or so men remaining in the regiment until, by some good fortune, Lieutenant Colonel Beck returned from sick furlough. Captain Tucker had enlisted in 1861 in the 21st Georgia in a company from Floyd County, a site a considerable distance from the 44th Georgia home counties. It is not likely that anyone from the 44th Georgia knew him before the war, although he developed impressive service credentials doubtless known to the 44th Georgia's leadership. He served as company first sergeant and the 21st Georgia regimental color-bearer before his election to lieutenant in 1862. Steady and reliable service earned him a promotion to captain in late 1864. He would lead the 44th Georgia for the rest of the war.<sup>42</sup>

### The Evacuation of Petersburg

General Grant realized that Fort Stedman represented a sort of last gasp for the Army of Northern Virginia. He increased the pressure on the Southside Railroad and by April 1, after the fighting at Five Forks, he sensed an end close at hand. He ordered an assault along the entire Confederate trench line for the next day. A focal point for one of the main attacks would be the sector occupied by the 44th Georgia and Cook's Brigade on the left of Grimes Division.



Since General Cook's wounding on March 25, Lieutenant Colonel E. A. Nash of the 4th Georgia commanded the brigade. Nash, like Cook, began wartime service with the 4th Georgia. Ironically, Nash outranked Cook at the regiment's organization and for over a year at the start of the war. Lieutenant Colonel Beck held senior date of rank to Nash, but Beck had not returned from sick leave in Georgia. Nash aligned his pitifully understrength brigade with his left adjoining Otey's Battery in the vicinity of the Crater and his right stretching to near the Jerusalem Plank Road north of Battery 25.<sup>43</sup> A third of the brigade stood picket duty 150 to 300 yards in front of the trenches, another third manned the trenches, and the remaining third rested behind the lines. The men had orders to sleep with their equipment in hand and ready to move at a moment's notice.<sup>44</sup>

About 11 P.M. on the night of April 1 Federal troops rushed and carried the picket lines protecting Grimes' sector. It took the Confederates several hours of confused fighting in the dark to re-establish the line. Fort Mahone guarded this sector of the Confederate line and formed a primary target for the Federal attack. The fighting seesawed in the darkness until Federal troops again drove in the Confederate pickets early on the morning of April 2 in preparation for the great assault Grant ordered.<sup>45</sup>

The attack began in the 44th Georgia's area shortly after 4:30 A.M. Six Pennsylvania infantry regiments from the First (200th, 208th, and 209th) and Second (205th, 207th, and 211th) Brigades, Third Division, Ninth Corps assaulted and captured the main trenches that Battle's Brigade occupied and also threw back the right flank of Cook's Brigade.<sup>46</sup> Nash appealed for assistance almost immediately. Grimes realized the danger and ordered all the brigades to attack and restore the line. The men went forward,

but found the Union troops positioned too strong for eviction. Some two hundred yards of the trenches passed into Federal possession and weakened the defense line considerably. Fort Mahone itself fell about 9 A.M. During a lull as he tried to readjust his lines, Nash discovered about one 44th Georgia soldier manned every eight feet of trench, a level insufficient to hold it against any attack.<sup>47</sup>

Some part of the 44th Georgia participated in the defense of Fort Gregg on April 2. The fort occupied key terrain along the Boydton Plank Road on the southwest part of the inner Petersburg defenses. Lieutenant Colonel Nash shifted at least two companies from the Fort Mahone sector as reinforcements to this area of the line. The assaulting Federals could be stopped only by darkness, and Company I lost two prisoners in this action. Company K lost one man captured.<sup>48</sup> Even if Colonel Nash could eject the Federals from their recent captures in the brigade's area, he lacked sufficient manpower or a reserve to hold them for any length of time. That factor held true for nearly every unit in Gordon's battleworn Second Corps. Since other Federal successes south of the city threatened to cut off the Army of Northern Virginia in Petersburg, Lee gave instructions to abandon the trenches and the city during the night of April 2 and march west.<sup>49</sup>

The fighting during the first two days of April further wore down the 44th Georgia. The regiment lost three more men killed in trenchline defense actions and at least another six wounded. The 44th Georgia reported 18 men lost as prisoners or war, but very likely these men for the most part were wounded from the Fort Stedman attack

on March 25 and trench defense actions of April 1-2. The men could not march with the regiment and Federal soldiers occupying Petersburg captured them in the hospitals.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 774-784.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 799.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas, 535.

<sup>5</sup>Henderson, 784.

<sup>6</sup>Thomas, 580.

<sup>7</sup>Henderson, 784.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas, 543.

<sup>9</sup>Henderson, 786.

<sup>10</sup>Thomas, 546.

<sup>11</sup>Smith, 17.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 12-20.

<sup>16</sup>Thomas, 488-490.

<sup>17</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>18</sup>1860 Census and 1850 Census.

<sup>19</sup>Smith, 12.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 14.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

- <sup>22</sup>Cowper, 92
- <sup>23</sup>Thomas, 35.
- <sup>24</sup>Jackson, 1 January 1866.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup>Jackson, 19 February 1865.
- <sup>27</sup>Cowper, 96-97.
- <sup>28</sup>OR, Series I, Volume 44, Part 1, 385.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>30</sup>Henderson, 763, 828.
- <sup>31</sup>Cowper, 96-98.
- <sup>32</sup>Noah Andre Trudeau, *The Last Citadel: Petersburg, Virginia, June 1864-April 1865* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1991), 335.
- <sup>33</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup>Thomas, 38
- <sup>35</sup>Ibid., 36-38
- <sup>36</sup>Gordon, 402.
- <sup>37</sup>Thomas, 36-39
- <sup>38</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>39</sup>Ibid., 40-43.
- <sup>40</sup>Henderson, 716-838.
- <sup>41</sup>Ibid., 764.
- <sup>42</sup>Thomas, 369.
- <sup>43</sup>Chris M. Calkins, *The Appomattox Campaign: March 29-April 7, 1865* (Conshohocken, PA: Combined Books, Inc., 1997), 44.

<sup>44</sup>Cowper, 104-105.

<sup>45</sup>Calkins, 43-44.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Cowper, 107.

<sup>48</sup>Henderson, 818-838.

<sup>49</sup>Trudeau, 364-365.

<sup>50</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

## CHAPTER 13

### STRONG WILLS, EMPTY STOMACHS, AND BLISTERED FEET

#### The Last March

The 44th Georgia turned its back on the trenches after dark on April 2. The men filed through the streets of Petersburg and crossed to the north bank of the Appomattox River. The march route turned almost due west after gaining the north bank, followed the Hickory and River roads, and crossed Goode's Bridge back over to the south bank of the Appomattox where the regiment camped near Scott's Shop during the night of April 3. The advance elements of Grimes' Division reached Amelia Court House before dawn on April 4 with the 44th Georgia following later in the morning.<sup>1</sup> The men rested while the division and brigade commissary officers attempted without much success to find food for issue as the regiment passed the night of April 4 around Amelia Court House.

The 44th Georgia joined in a brigade and division line of battle during the afternoon of April 5 to ward off pursuing Federal forces. After dark, the battleline formed the rearguard of the army and covered the retreat through the night west toward Deatonville. The Second Corps followed the army wagon trains and consequently made slow going west toward Jetersville before zigzagging north and then west again along what is now State Route (SR) 617.<sup>2</sup> Federal forces pursued Grimes' Division vigorously with the First and Third Divisions from the bluecoated Second Corps. Around 8 A.M. the pursuit caused Grimes to drop two brigades behind to form a line of battle near the R. T. Vaughn house halfway between Deatonville and Amelia Springs.<sup>3</sup> He sent Cook's

and two more brigades about a half-mile further on to form another line of battle screening Deatonsville. The brigades leapfrogged each other in this manner for most of the day as they moved west.<sup>4</sup>

General Ewell, the former Second Corps commander, commanded a group of Richmond garrison troops in the march. Sometime during April 6, he directed the wagon trains following his element to turn north of the Deatonsville Road (SR617) at Holt's Corner and move northwest on the Jamestown Road (SR618). General Gordon turned the Second Corps after the wagon trains, assuming that it remained his responsibility to follow and protect them. Grimes' Division followed, with the 44th Georgia still alternating part of its march time in the rearguard.<sup>5</sup>

Pursuing Federal troops attacked and nearly destroyed Ewell's force at Saylor's Creek that afternoon. Two Union divisions continued to press after Grimes' Division and fought a pitched battle with the Confederates at the Lockett farm about two miles north of Ewell's fight and along the Saylor's Creek watercourse. The Confederate wagon trains with Gordon experienced enough trouble crossing Saylor's Creek at Double Bridges to enable the Federals to get too close. Grimes formed a line of battle about 4 P.M. to receive them.<sup>6</sup> The Federal divisions, now reinforced, swept down the slope toward the creek. Grimes held on briefly at one location before retreating and reforming at another. Grimes noticed both his flanks breaking and quickly ordered a withdrawal across the stream and up the west bank. Federal troops held the Double Bridges by now so the 44th Georgia had to wade Saylor's Creek to safety. Grimes noted after the war that his

division narrowly escaped through a gap barely 200 yards wide between the closing Federal pincers.<sup>7</sup>

The march continued toward Farmville during the night of April 6. Although Gordon lost over 1,700 prisoners at the Lockett's farm battle, the 44th Georgia suffered very little in the rearguard engagements between Amelia Court House and Farmville, losing one man from Company K killed, a Company B man wounded, and one soldier captured from Company A.<sup>8</sup> The exhausted men trudged along the pedestrian walkway over High Bridge during the hours of darkness on April 6. The darkness, route, and pace greatly complicated unit integrity. The 44th Georgia lost 11 men captured at High Bridge as a result of this march. Either they could not rejoin the regiment after Lockett's farm, or despaired from marching exhausted and lost in unfamiliar country.<sup>9</sup> The regiment's survivors marched down the Southside Railroad right of way along the tracks to reach Farmville.<sup>10</sup>

Several units successfully drew rations from the army supply wagons concentrated in Farmville, but Cook's Brigade did not, departing Farmville around noon April 7. This time the march aimed for the area around Cumberland Church, about three miles distant.<sup>11</sup> Again the 44th Georgia formed part of a screen for the army's wagon train. During the march from Farmville Cook's Brigade marched cross-country a hundred yards parallel to the wagons using the road to Cumberland Church. The 44th Georgia arrived in the vicinity of Cumberland Church crossroads about noon and took a position in the center of Grimes' battleline in the woods east of the church.<sup>12</sup>



A Federal attack on the Confederate left flank late in the day threw back Mahone's Division, and he appealed to Grimes for support. Grimes pulled the brigades of Cook, Cox, and Coward out of his line and counterattacked. This action helped stabilize the situation around 4 P.M. The 44th Georgia recorded no losses in this fight and prepared for another night march after dark on April 7 as Lee desperately tried to escape his pursuers and find a place to feed his army.<sup>13</sup> Confederate units began vacating positions around Cumberland Church an hour before midnight. The 44th Georgia marched north from Cumberland Church until gaining the Lynchburg Stagecoach Road. The column turned due west at that point and headed for New Store along what is now State Route 636.<sup>14</sup>

The Second Corps marched through Sheppard's Crossroads early in the morning hours, in fact passing a house used later that night as a headquarters and billet for General Grant. The 44th Georgia reached New Store, about twenty miles from Farmville, after marching all through the early morning hours of April 8. The tired column continued on to the west along the Richmond-Lynchburg Stagecoach Road. The Army of Northern Virginia and the 44th Georgia reached their final bivouac site on a rise east of Appomattox Court House late in the day.<sup>15</sup>

Although General Lee had already communicated with General Grant concerning surrender negotiations, one more battle remained to be fought by the army of Northern Virginia and the 44th Georgia would participate in it. Lee assigned Gordon and his Second Corps the task of shouldering aside Federal cavalry blocking the route west of Appomattox early on April 9. The attack intended to drive west using the Stagecoach

Road for a guide and wheel down from the north and secure the routes to the west toward Lynchburg. Colonel Nash posted his small brigade on the right of Gordon's proposed advance, connecting with the right flank brigade of Cox. The advancing skirmish line cleared some Federals from their front soon after daybreak and quickly came under accurate cannon fire from Battery A, 2nd U.S. Artillery.<sup>16</sup>

The men pressed the advance and soon executed the wheel to the south across the Stagecoach Road. Two cannons belong to the Federal battery fell captive to the attacking Confederates. The way west now seemed clear, but it would only remain so for only a brief moment before General Foster's division from the Federal Army of the James arrived and took up positions blocking any escape for the Confederates. Another division arrived to support Foster. Gordon quickly realized that he could go no further to the west and requested reinforcements from General Lee. The army commander had none to spare and shortly after receiving Gordon's message he accepted the inevitable. Accordingly, he met with General Grant later that morning and surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia.<sup>17</sup> Included in the surrender were the seventy-seven soldiers remaining with the 44th Georgia Infantry to the last.<sup>18</sup>

### The Ties That Bind

At least 1,315 men served in the 44th Georgia during its 37 months of wartime service. As a group, they participated in many more defeats and drawn battles than victories. Yet, the 44th Georgia continued to field a fighting element just as strong, or stronger, in cohesive spirit than other Army of Northern Virginia battle formations. What

factors made this possible? Clearly it is the combined effect of training, leadership, economic background, religion, and family connections on the regiment's cohesion, but how was this accomplished? And, equally important, what lessons can this study offer to the United States Army of today and into the twenty-first century?

Seventy-seven (5.8 percent) of the group of men serving in the 44th Georgia remained in the regimental ranks at the Appomattox surrender. At least five other men who served with the regiment and then departed to fill other positions in the Army of Northern Virginia made it to Appomattox, but they are counted separately from the regimental rank and file for the purpose of this study. An analysis of the seventy-seven men remaining at Appomattox and the 1,315 that manned the regiment as a whole gives several strong clues to forces holding the 44th Georgia together.

### Training

Forty-eight of the seventy-seven Appomattox men, nearly two-thirds, joined the 44th Georgia in March 1862 at the regiment's initial organization. An additional twenty-two men enlisted in the few months after the organization and before the end of the summer in 1862. Most of these twenty-two new recruits arrived at Camp McIntosh and spent significant time training with the 44th Georgia before it departed for service in Virginia in late May. This shows that 90.9% of the men remaining with the 44th Georgia at Appomattox either stood with the regiment during its organization or joined it very shortly thereafter.

This fact illustrates that the regiment fielded a set nucleus for the entire Civil War and solidified this nucleus very early in its organizational life. The initial training period at Camp Stephens took six weeks and higher level training lasted another six weeks at Camp McIntosh. By the end of the training in North Carolina, the 44th Georgia departed for combat operations in Virginia with a consistent core of privates that would remain stable in personality, if not numbers, throughout the regiment's existence. The regiment would never be called on to train a large number of recruits and rapidly integrate them into the unit social and military structure with the potential adverse impact on cohesion.

It is likely that the 44th Georgia home counties could have supplied replacements to fill ranks depleted at Mechanicsville. However, the Confederacy did not operate a regimental replacement system where recruiting officers would attempt to recruit men to replace battle losses. In Greene County, home of the 44th Georgia's Company K, recruiting officers would have had to compete for recruits against infantry companies from the 3rd, 8th, and 55th Georgia, in addition to one from Phillips' Georgia Legion. By late 1863 it was not likely that the home counties could have furnished many new men to the 44th Georgia. The last regiment Georgia raised and fielded for Confederate service was the 66th Georgia in September 1863. Consolidated companies in the 66th Georgia contained some men from no less than five of the 44th Georgia home counties, probably the last batch of fit men that could be compelled to serve. By 1864, the only replacements the 44th Georgia could hope for were individuals coming old enough to join the regiment to soldier with a relative.

The core of the 44th Georgia therefore remained stable throughout the war with the regimental strength hovering around 500 able-bodied men from late 1862 through mid 1864. This group of veterans were largely together for several training periods where the regiment made productive use of time to increase its training proficiency in drill and tactics. After the Seven Days' Battles, the regiment rested and drilled new leaders for six weeks prior to the Antietam Campaign. After Fredericksburg, the regiment used fourteen weeks of winter camp to integrate a small number of new recruits, elect new leaders, and prepare for the 1863 campaign season. The snowball fight that winter illustrated that the 44th Georgia was a cohesive unit. This training period apparently paid huge dividends on the first day at Chancellorsville.

The regiment's leaders used time in winter camp along the Rapidan the same way in the first four months of 1864. Again, this cohesive spirit proved itself in a snowball fight on March 23 involving portions of at least four brigades that lasted a full day. The 44th Georgia performed capably in the Wilderness and during the first few days of skirmishing around Spotsylvania prior to May 10. Evidence has not been found to indicate that the 44th Georgia practiced drill in the 1864-1865 winter camp, although small numbers, worn out soldiers, and nearly constant defensive duties probably account for this if they did not.

Although the numbers of men standing in the regiment dwindled rapidly in 1864, the regiment still relied on its stable core of trained, veteran manpower to replace leaders lost to disease, discharge, disablement, and death. For example, from beginning service in March 1862 with 140 leadership positions in the ten companies, the regiment replaced

all ten captains, all thirty lieutenants, thirty-nine of forty sergeants, and forty-seven of fifty corporals from the original set. No record has been found of any of these men reduced or dismissed for performing unsatisfactorily. In fact, promotion to the next higher position is the cause of thirty-three leaders leaving their originally elected position. Death in battle is second, removing thirty more leaders. Discharges and officer resignations for wound disabilities, illnesses, and conditions existing before enlistment accounted for an additional twenty-four vacancies. Battle captures vacated nineteen positions and disease accounted for almost all of the remaining vacancies.<sup>19</sup>

A high rate of leadership transitions could be expected to have a huge impact on the 44th Georgia's cohesion, but apparently it did not. Despite the loss or disablement of thirty-three leaders at Beaverdam Creek in June 1862 and the loss or capture of seventy-four more at Spotsylvania in May 1864, the 44th Georgia still was able to elect competent leaders from the regiment's core. The new leaders after Beaverdam Creek led the 44th Georgia through its first campaign, culminating at the Battle of Sharpsburg in September 1862. The new set of leaders elected after Spotsylvania saw the 44th Georgia through the hardest and most discouraging campaigning the regiment experienced with the march on Washington and the triple defeats of Winchester, Fisher's Hill, and Cedar Creek. That the leaders were able to quickly and competently perform their duties is a credit to the regiment's training during periods of inactivity.

### Economic System Survival

Family economic status in 1860 can give a clue to why the men persevered for as long as they did in the face of such long odds. The *1860 Federal Census* enumerators reported two separate dollar values of real estate and personal property estate in census records. A word of caution is necessary when relying on these figures. Some are obviously enumerator estimates while some families lacked any report at all. Others are underreported since the figures could possibly be a basis for tax assessments. The accuracy and method for reporting the figures varied widely from county to county, an understatement at best. Still, they are a valuable tool for estimating the economic status of the population joining the regiment as well as the men at the final surrender proceedings.

Many of the 44th Georgia soldiers lived with their parents in 1860 and did not have a separately reported real estate or personal estate value. In many instances, there is no reported real estate or property value for the family. The method used by this study is to use the real estate and property wealth of the soldier's family head of household when a separate value could not be identified. Based on this method, the average value of real estate owned by a 44th Georgia soldier or his family in 1860 was approximately \$1,940 for the 178 men or families with real estate values assessed or reported by census enumerators. Value of personal estate property approximated \$3,550 for 334 soldiers or their families.

The phrase "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight" is often used to describe the Civil War manpower utilization for the common soldier. In the case of the 44th Georgia,

this does not accurately characterize the make-up of the original regimental musters, nor does it accurately describe the economic status of the men at Appomattox. For the Appomattox soldiers remaining in the regiment, only seven could be identified as having a value of real estate assessed for themselves or their families in 1860. With so small a sample, this figure might not be totally representative of the land properties owned by 44th Georgia enlistees at the beginning of their service. Still, this value is only slightly less than \$800, and although less than half of the average of \$1,940 for a soldier or his family at enlistment, this is a considerable amount of potential acreage given the land values for 1860.

Personal estate values can be determined for eighteen of the 44th Georgia soldiers surrendering with General Lee and it averages to about \$8050 for 1860. One soldier's family reported in excess of \$68,000 for 1860, one reported over \$28,000, and two men or families reported over \$14,000. In 1860 dollars, these are indications of considerable wealth. Even removing the top two values, the average is still over \$3000, a considerable fortune for 1860 and only \$550 less than the average for the regiment at enlistment in 1862.

Company C of the 44th Georgia carried the reputation as being built mostly from a network of wealthy planters' sons in southern Clarke County. To a certain extent, Company C shared this trait with all companies in the regiment. These men and their families stood to lose most economically by a Southern defeat or a fundamental change in their agricultural and economic system. The 44th Georgia's ranks contained some men from very wealthy families or who were considerably wealthy themselves, yet they



fought as common soldiers. Clearly, the desire to maintain a certain way of life and standard of living in some way motivated 44th Georgia soldiers to enlist in 1862 and sustained the regiment's sense of purpose during thirty-seven months of wartime service.

Occupations from 1860 census records further solidify the linkage between livelihood and loyal service in the 44th Georgia. At its acceptance into Confederate service, seventy-seven percent of the regiment's strength reported occupations of planter, farmer, or farm laborer. This is equivalent to the regimental remnant at Appomattox that had 80 percent of the men reporting the same occupations before the war. Occupations were listed in 1860 for thirty-one of the 44th Georgia Appomattox parolees. Twenty-five occupations are from the planter, farmer, overseer, and farm laborer livelihoods. The listing as "student" for two young adult men in 1860 strongly implies that their families could afford to educate them beyond standard schooling. The two store clerks and one each blacksmith and carriage maker belonged to professions that directly supported the cotton cash crop economy.

Only the ambrotypist could be called a way of earning a living that did not directly support the cotton system, indicting that over 96 percent of the prewar occupations for 44th Georgia soldiers at Appomattox reflected agrarian pursuits or direct support of it. This compares favorably with the figure of 99 percent of soldiers at the 44th's organization supporting the economic system then in place. This provides proof that the common 44th Georgia soldier throughout the regiment's life, including Appomattox, reflected family backgrounds and livelihoods that stood to be affected traumatically if the South's cash crop economy based on slave labor changed. The men,

in common with soldiers on both Confederate and Union sides, expected to return home after the war and pick up their lives where the Civil War had disrupted them. Probably one of the most important motivating factors keeping the 44th Georgia soldier fighting is the fact that they wished for the system and their occupational role in it to remain unchanged.

### Community and Family Connections

Numerous family and community connections formed a cohesive force that not only bound the individual companies tightly, but also contributed to strong ties binding the companies to each other. Nine counties furnished organized units to the 44th Georgia. In 1860, family and community ties stretched across county boundary lines much more tightly than is common in Georgia today. In fact, the 44th Georgia has many cases of soldiers from one county enlisting in the company formed in an adjacent county in order to serve with family members. This appears most frequently in Companies A, D, E, and I with men from Henry, Clayton, and Spalding Counties. Company K, from Greene County, shared several cross-boundary enlistments with Company I's Morgan County detachment and Company F from Putnam County. Every company in the 44th had soldiers from adjacent counties in addition to soldiers with family connections by blood or marriage in other companies. This mechanism helped to bond the companies together in a way not available to companies from separate corners of the state serving side by side.

Letters surviving from the 44th Georgia families at home reflect undeniable pride in the service of sons, fathers, brothers as just as much as concern for their safety. These families suffered the death of one, and many times more, members serving in the regiment. Just as many families sent male relatives off to serve in other regiments and had a portion of them return disabled or never return at all. Economic factors aside, the families and soldiers were extremely reluctant to quit the struggle because they had invested so much of their family resources in the conflict.

Reviewing battle losses at Spotsylvania are key to understanding the powerful force that family connections exerted on the cohesion of the 44th Georgia. On May 10, during Upton's attack, at least nineteen pairs of brother entered captivity together. The brothers in the regiment often fought side by side and this indicates an understandable reluctance to part from a sibling even in the heat of battle. In several cases, one of the brothers was wounded and unable to withdraw. The uninjured brother probably preferred the uncertainty of captivity and looking after his wounded sibling over separating, even when his own safety was at risk.

Lieutenant Henry H. Strickland and his brother James C. Strickland are the only two brothers identified as being in the 44th Georgia at Appomattox, although several of the men were doubtless cousins or related by marriage. Again in illustration of the strong force of familial ties, at least fourteen of the Appomattox men had one or more brothers serving in the regiment sometime during its existence. In six cases, a 44th Georgia soldier who made it to Appomattox left a dead sibling somewhere in the previous 37 months of the regiment's service. In one verifiable instance, this was a twin brother. The

family ties in the regiment's companies obviously continued to play a strong role in holding them together until the very end of the war.

### Religion

Religion, already a pervasive part of Southern society in the years leading up to the Civil War, played a large role in holding the 44th Georgia together both as a fighting force and a cohesive social unit. The practice of religion received official Confederate recognition with the appointment of regimental chaplains. The first chaplain of the 44th Georgia was Thomas J. Beck, a close relative of Captain, later Lieutenant Colonel, James W. Beck of Company K. Although Chaplain Beck resigned in midsummer 1862, he built a reputation of ministering to the wounded after the Seven Days' Battles and whenever he had the opportunity in camp.<sup>20</sup>

After Beck's departure, the 44th functioned without an official chaplain until the appointment of Henry E. Brooks on May 16, 1864.<sup>21</sup> This might indicate a shortage of officially recognized chaplains in the Confederate forces. It could hint at the vigor of the chaplains in the sister units of the 44th Georgia. When matched with the numerous country preachers in the 44th Georgia's ranks, it meant that the regiment could maintain its spiritual commitment to the war effort without an appointed chaplain for some time.

In addition to official government recognition of religious activity, the 44th Georgia operated under a number of leaders that not only strongly supported the practice of religion, but led by example in this area as well. General Doles, a grandson and nephew of two ministers, actively encouraged the practice of religion in his brigade.

Colonel Robert A. Smith was certainly another, earning newspaper recognition before his death for his attentiveness to the regiment's spiritual needs.<sup>22</sup> Major John C. Key and Lieutenant Levi J. Smith were just two more of many.

Another indicator of the religion's positive effect on holding the regiment together is the number of men who served for long periods in the regiment, survived the war, and then went on to become ministers themselves. It is completely credible to believe that these men supported, participated in, and probably directly assisted with faith activities in the regiment. Lieutenant Colonel Beck was one.<sup>23</sup> Lieutenant John F. McClelland and Private John A. Jackson, both from Company I, were two more.<sup>24</sup>

Another indication of the power of religious activity binding the regiment together is the number of revivals sweeping through the winter camps of 1862-1863 and a year later on a larger scale along the banks of the Rapidan. Authorities at the brigade and regiment level officially encouraged attendance at massive services held at an open air amphitheater that could accommodate the whole brigade at a single time.<sup>25</sup> The 12th Georgia's chaplain spoke approvingly of the number of religious conversions and baptisms occurring in the 44th Georgia.

Soldiers who survived the slaughter at Beaverdam Creek in June 1862 frequently wrote letters home professing their faith in the Almighty for their survival. This trend continued with letters urging families at home to pray for the men, the regiment, and the Confederacy appearing throughout the regiment's service. It is particularly evident after the military disasters of Spotsylvania and Cedar Creek in 1864. The letter writers insisted that they believed God understood the Southern cause. A 44th Georgia soldier raised to

respect the power of worship would find it hard to abandon a unit fighting for a cause understood by the Almighty.

### Leadership

Training, family ties, economic background, and religion were all significant factors that contributed to the cohesion of the 44th Georgia. However, the sustained quality of the regiment's leaders is probably the most significant factor that held the regiment together during its thirty-seven months of existence. Without a deep well of trusted leadership to draw on, the regiment could have not endured losses like it suffered at Beaverdam Creek and still be able to march on campaign barely six weeks later. Likewise lacking motivated leaders the 44th Georgia could not have recovered from the Antietam and Fredericksburg campaigns to become a dominant force during the first day at Chancellorsville. Arguably the regiment passed its greatest test as it struggled to recover from the debacle of Spotsylvania while simultaneously campaigning in the Shenandoah Valley. Although assisted by other factors, there is no doubt that effective, caring, and dedicated leadership held the regiment together.

Although outside the specific scope of this study, the quality and stability of leadership above the 44th Georgia contributed significantly to its internal cohesive forces and therefore merits comment. At division level, the 44th operated under Generals D. H. Hill, Robert Rodes, Stephen Ramseur, and Bryan Grimes. With the exception of Hill, the 44th Georgia officers and men always spoke well of their division commanders. The division commanders frequently took steps to ensure adequate food, shoes, and rest for

the soldiers on the march. The switch from Hill to Rodes occurred in an orderly fashion in 1863, and the other two transitions came as a result of battlefield deaths in 1864. Perhaps not coincidentally, 1864 turned out to be the 44th Georgia's worst year.

Brigade commanders exerted a very positive and pronounced influence on the 44th Georgia's cohesion. General Ripley led from the front and provided a visible, motivating example to the troops in his brigade during the Seven Days Battles and Sharpsburg. His cordial communications with the regiment's officers inspired a confidence that the officers passed on to the men. The 44th Georgia as a whole obviously liked Ripley, trusted his leadership, and genuinely regretted "Old Rip's" departure after Sharpsburg.

General Doles succeeded Ripley on the basis of a credible combat performance at Sharpsburg. He led the brigade for the longest period of time, about twenty-one months, and the regiment generally trusted his leadership. During that time the 44th Georgia developed a strong bond with Doles, especially by following him during the regiment's two greatest battle performances at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. Although his death at Bethesda Church in June 1864 came as a rude shock that saddened the regiment, his departure was inevitable. Due to the high losses suffered by the high leadership of the Army of Northern Virginia during Grant's 1864 campaign against Richmond, Doles would have likely departed the brigade for a division command very soon had he not died.

General Philip Cook led the brigade for eleven months. Several soldiers spoke highly of him both as a person and as a gentleman and mentioned the fact that he attended

to the needs of his troops. His quiet manner did not seem to engender the same level of confidence and battlefield trust earned by Doles at first, a factor aggravated by the 44th Georgia and the rest of the brigade mourning over Doles' death. However, Cook capably led the brigade through the Shenandoah Valley in 1864 and fought in front of the brigade at Fort Stedman, suffering a broken arm from gunfire in the process. Lieutenant Colonel E. A. Nash from the 4th Georgia then replaced Cook for the last two weeks of the war, but his presence had little time to have a significant, if any, effect on the 44th Georgia.

The 44th Georgia's regimental and company leadership seemed to be in a constant state of change, although this did not appear to have disrupted unit cohesion to any significant degree. The regiment lost two regimental commanders mortally wounded, two disabled by wounds, and two captured in combat. Major Key, clearly a cohesive force in the 44th Georgia, received wounds disabling him from future field service at Gettysburg. At least eight company commanders died from wounds in battle, and an additional six left the regiment for extended periods of time to recover from wounds or received discharges. Eight lieutenants in the regiment fell killed or mortally wounded on the battlefield with eight more wounded. Yet, the regiment continued to elect new officers when the regulations and regimental strength allowed for elections to be held. After the first regimental elections in March 1862, no one from outside the ten original companies stood for election to a leadership position.

An important factor is the way in which leader vacancies were filled. All the regimental soldiers present voted in the initial leader elections held in March 1862 at Camp Stephens. Single elections at company level replaced leaders discharged for illness



at Camp McIntosh. Regimental and company elections were held sometime in the two or three days after Mechanicsville to replace leaders killed or disabled on the banks of Beaverdam Creek.

This pattern of the company rank and file soldier having input continued throughout the war. This mechanism, common to the Confederate army, obviously was a popularity contest for the first couple of elections, but the popularity contest atmosphere did not survive the test of the first battles. Veteran soldiers would elect only those men who they thought would look to their welfare, as well as serve as capable tacticians. This feeling probably progressed as the war continued and, if so, it ensured that the elected leaders carried the full confidence and backing of the companies that they led.

The initial set of the 44th Georgia's leaders took the regiment to at least a seventy percent casualty rate at Mechanicsville and suffered over thirty officers and noncommissioned officers lost. However, new men stepped up and delivered decisive leadership to rally the regiment and lead it on the march after the retreating Federal troops the very next day. This is a pattern that the regiment repeated numerous times during the Civil War.

Just four officers surrendered with the regiment, the commander Captain Tucker, Adjutant Richard W. Freeman, Surgeon Richard A. Christian, and Lieutenant Henry H. Strickland in Company H. Fourteen sergeants and three corporals did so. Discounting Captain Tucker because of his very brief period leading the regiment and Surgeon Christian, these nineteen leaders shared ten wounds between them.<sup>26</sup> In a time when the

best leaders led from the front or placed themselves in extremely hazardous combat situations, the 44th Georgia leaders provided the best, if not the safest, personal example.

Of the nineteen officers and noncommissioned officers present in the 44th Georgia at Appomattox, five of them began their wartime service in an original elected leadership position at the regiment's organization. Another eight assumed an elected leadership position in 1862, the majority of them within just a couple of months after the regiment organized. All of them moved up based on a higher vacancy, earned trust, and proven loyal service to their respective company. This provided the 44th Georgia soldiers with a subset of leaders that served in continuous leadership positions to the very end of hostilities. In fact, Captain Tucker is the only documented case of an officer or noncommissioned officer appointed from outside the regiment to fill a leader vacancy.

Unquestionably it is this core of leaders that provided the strongest factor holding the regiment together under severe, trying circumstances. Despite suffering terrible casualties at Mechanicsville, the regiment did not disintegrate. Instead it rebounded with strong performances at Sharpsburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. The disaster at Spotsylvania badly depleted the regiment's leaders, new ones held it together to make substantial contributions during the 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign. Strong leadership kept the 44th Georgia together as a cohesive fighting unit. When assisted by training, family connections, economic background, and religion, this strong leadership provided one of the bedrock regiments on which the Army of Northern Virginia built its base.

### The 44th Georgia Legacy

By the time of this writing, the 44th Georgia Volunteer Infantry had ended service over 134 years ago. The United States Army today uses new weapons, new tactics, and trains to fight in areas never dreamed of by the 44th Georgia's rank and file. Yet, this study contains some lessons that apply to the Army now and most likely will apply well into the twenty-first century. The most important of these lessons involve reserve units.

It is a given fact that the United States will have to rely on a significant portion of Army Reserve and National Guard units in a future war. The 44th Georgia, for many practical purposes, roughly compares to the present reserve system units. The regiment recruited men from specific geographic locations and had two periods of training before commitment to battle. The first is an often touted advantage of the reserve component system. The second is a much desired, and often much required, gift of training time.

A great deal of the 44th Georgia's cohesion is owed to the very fact that the regiment was composed of companies where a stranger was an oddity. When serving in Virginia, the regiment benefited from immense, vocal community support at home. This helped sustain the soldiers' morale. Reserve component units have this kind of support to a much greater extent than do active component units. This is a compelling argument for keeping reserve component brigades serving together after mobilization.

The 44th Georgia trained about three months before being committed to action around Richmond in June 1862. The present Army hierarchy insists that reserve component units are ready to mobilize and perform combat actions on a level equal to the active component forces. I believe that the 44th Georgia's experiences call this in

question. Had the regiment been committed sooner, it would have been deficient in drill and leader experience. Extended training at Camp McIntosh culled out many of the older, sick, or infirm leaders and soldiers before combat operations began.

For the Army to expect its reserve component units to perform adequately, then it must strive to grant those units sufficient time to train beyond mobilization and make some necessary personnel changes from within. Leaders should be elevated from within the organization, not pulled from outside when neither the unit nor the leader know each other. The price is the cost associated with activating a unit too soon or even calling up one that will not be needed. However, this is a small price to pay to prevent a battlefield disaster.

For mobilized and committed reserve components to enjoy strong local community support, the Army should implement a system to recruit replacements from the same geographical area where a reserve unit has its home station. Recruits reaching the 44th Georgia knew many of the men in the company that they joined quite well. Their relatives could be counted on to welcome them and look to their welfare. This ensured that a soldier entered his first battle as well prepared as he could be under the circumstances. At the very least, he did not feel alone.

As much as many prefer otherwise, horrible warfare and suffering seem to be fixtures of human existence. Predictably, most soldiers are reluctant to join in combat when the reasons for their participation are less than convincing. However, overcoming the matching of reluctant soldiers and horrible experiences is something that the 44th Georgia did very well for over three years. In looking to the twenty-first century, the

present United States Army would do well to examine how the 44th Georgia formed, fought, and finished the war with a small, yet thoroughly cohesive core. The examples and techniques are timeless.

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<sup>1</sup>Cowper, 109.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 110.

<sup>3</sup>Calkins, 98.

<sup>4</sup>Cowper, 110-112.

<sup>5</sup>Calkins, 105, 107.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 114.

<sup>7</sup>Cowper, 111.

<sup>8</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Calkins, 124-125.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 130-131.

<sup>12</sup>Cowper, 112.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Calkins, 138.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 137.

<sup>16</sup>Chris M. Calkins, *The Battles of Appomattox Station and Appomattox Court House: April 8-9, 1865*, 2d ed. (Lynchburg, VA: E. H. Howard, Inc., 1987), 76.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 80-93.

<sup>18</sup>Henderson, 716-838.

<sup>19</sup>Henderson, 726-838.

<sup>20</sup>Thomas, 492.

<sup>21</sup>Henderson, 727.

<sup>22</sup>*Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel*, 21 May 1862.

<sup>23</sup>Thomas, 506.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 493, 579.

<sup>25</sup>Jones, 506.

<sup>26</sup>Henderson, 726-838.

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